



Collage: Phillip Lollar

T/SOE/R
Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

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Anarchy

A Journal of Desire Armed

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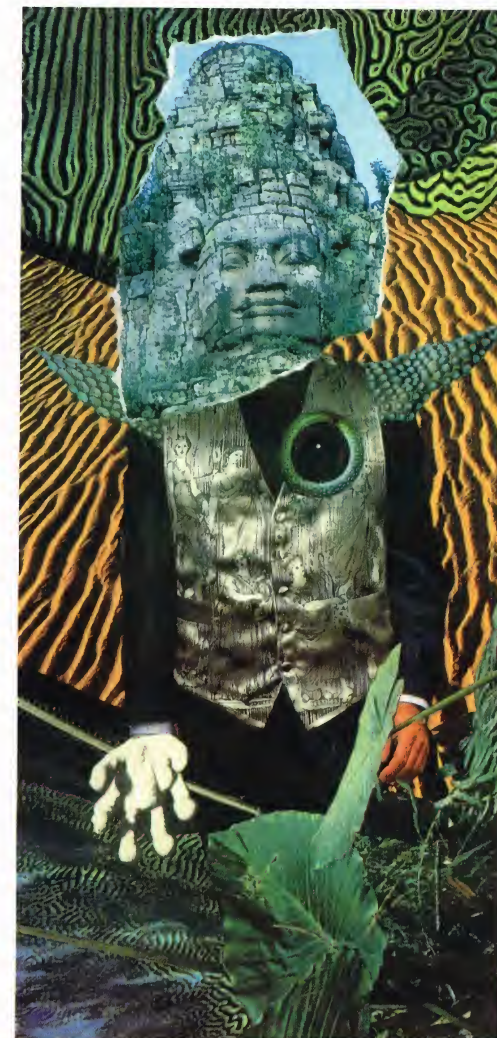
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Collage: Phillip Lollar

Whatever You Do— Get Away with It

What should anarchists be doing? Those who *want* to spend time and energy advancing anarchic knowledge, values and goals might first do well to question just about everything they take for granted about anarchy and anarchism past and present. Many, if not most, of the easy answers to questions about what is to be done have proven to be less than effective or even counterproductive. Now, with the ongoing collapse of the international left, and with it the disintegration of anarcho-leftism as well, it is long past time to reexamine the practical and conceptual roots of anarchist resistance and reconstruction. The abolition of illusions can free the way for creative activity.

However, this type of questioning requires the conscious cultivation of open-mindedness and an almost systematic skepticism. While these qualities aren't entirely absent within the anarchist milieu, they aren't as widespread as could be hoped in a radical milieu which overtly begins by challenging one of the biggest and most powerful of social myths—that of the necessity for the existence of the nation-state.

Here are some of the major areas where the type of questioning I have in mind needs to be pursued. Each of these areas has already had some share of critical re-investigation by anarchists and others in recent years. But much more remains to be done before a new, self-critical consensus is forged in each of these areas which will allow them to be integrated into a new whole, a clearer, more sensible and larger vision of anarchy than has generally been imagined within the historical anarchist movement.

(1) Capitalism, Wage-Labor, Commodity Exchange: The basic analysis of the modern economic juggernaut needs to be renewed. Without an understanding of the structure of economic relationships within the worldwide system of capitalism, anarchist dreams will remain impotent. This will include new assaults on the ideologies of Work and Consumption. A world without "workers" and "consumers" must be imagined, without illusions about co-operatives, self-management or workers' control being any sort of genuine alternative *within* capitalist economies. Too many anarchists have yet to reach this understanding, especially the oxymoronic "anarcho-capitalists" and "libertarian capitalists," but also leftist anarchists whose goals are usually limited to self-contradictory versions of anarcho-social democracy or anarcho-syndicalism.

(2) Leftism, Unions, Identity Politics, Single-Issue Politics: The critique of the left as the left-wing of capital, while widespread within anarchist circles, probably remains a minority critique. The critique of unions and syndicalism may be a bit more prevalent, but still needs to be pressed. While the related critique of organizationalism *per se* (and compulsory roles) has barely been started. Identity politics has made inroads within the anarchist milieu which are too rarely criticized. The predominant extent to which multiculturalism

serves as a capitalist marketing strategy is not appreciated by most anarchists. Identity politics and single-issue groups have made some definite contributions to the anarchist milieu (especially feminism and ecology), but their ultimate value will require shedding misguided attempts to subsume the more basic anarchist critiques of alienation and hierarchical power under their own narrower, ideological agendas.

(3) Ideology, Religion, Mass Media, Spectacle: The critique of the mass

organization and mobilization of people around abstract ideals, images and projections has always been a fertile area for anarchist practice. However, this practice has usually been limited to partial critiques of particular ideologies or classes of ideologies and religions. The next step demands the development of an understanding of the complicity of all ideology and religion (including anarchism and primitive religions) in the maintenance of social alienation. The mass media is the primary modern purveyor of ideological, religious and spectacular consciousness, however educational institutions, churches, political and professional organizations, and the arts remain strong contributors. While pseudo-radical ideologies (leftism, environmentalism, reformist feminism, etc.) need more powerful challenges to their continuing efforts to recuperate the social discontent that they so successfully channel back into support for capital and state.

(4) Technology, Industrial Production, Professionalization, Economic Development: The anarchist critiques of technology and industrialism have been historically sporadic as more and more radicals were all too easily seduced—convinced to ignore their misgivings and confer their uncritical assent—by the ideologies of technological progress and industrial development. Technology and industrial production are never, as the pervasive myth portrays, just neutral tools amenable to control from below for human goals as easily as from above. As this has become clearer there is less and less excuse for anarchists to resist fundamental questioning of the roles technology and industrial production play in the



maintenance of capitalism and social hierarchy. Currently, the process of industrialization is consolidating its colonization of the human world on three major fronts: in the relatively intangible sphere of human health, consciousness and culture through their professionalization and commoditization, in the growth industries of biological and information technologies, and the formerly overlooked margins of the "Third World" through continuing international "development" strategies.

(5) Civilization, Progress, Science, Enlightenment Rationalism: If the process of civilization is conceived as consonant with the self-domestication of humanity, it is clear that the roots of social alienation and hierarchy remain much deeper than analyses trapped within the assumptions of the modern era. A convincing critique of civilization remains to be developed, though a beginning has been made in the last twenty years, and traditions of resistance have been maintained in many non-industrialized societies from which we can learn much. Although Enlightenment rationalism has made highly important contributions to human knowledge, it is also a major component of modern social alienation. The fetishization of technological and industrial progress as well as scientific reductionism find their ultimate fulfillment in

ideologies of historical progress and an autonomous science which stem from Enlightenment rationalism. A major goal of radicals in the coming years will be a convincing critique of civilization and the Enlightenment rationalism in which we find ourselves immersed that preserves what is of value in these turns.

Individual anarchists will continue to follow their own instincts and whims regarding what to read, how seriously to investigate different areas, and where to press their criticisms and practice. The general eclipse of genuine radicalism since the 1940s and '50s, with the brief exception of the '60s, has had two major effects. It has cut us off from recent traditions of resistance from which we still have much to learn. But it has also diminished the hold of even the most tenacious mistakes of those traditions, allowing us a relative freedom to reexamine previous eras and marginal movements for clues to what is wrong with society and where we might still have a chance to go. Let's use that freedom wisely.

-Jason McQuinn

This essay was originally written for a symposium appearing in the new issue of *Social Anarchism*, and will be the first of a new series of editorials to appear in this magazine.

He Means It. Do You?

Today opposition is anarchist or it is non-existent. This is the barest minimum coherence in the struggle against an engulfing totality.

And while ten years ago the milieu generally called anti-authoritarian was largely syndicalist, those leftist residues are fading out altogether.

Very few now find a vista of work and production at all liberatory.

As the smell of this false and rotting order rises to the heavens, registering an unprecedented toll on all living beings, faith in the whole modern world evaporates. Industrialism and its ensemble looks like it has been a very bad idea, sort of a wrong turn begun still earlier. Civilization itself, with its logic of domestication and destruction, seems untenable.

After all, is there anyone who is happy in this desolation?

Lovely new indicators of how it is panning out include increasing self-mutilation among the young and murder of children by their own parents. Somehow a society that is steadily more impersonal, cynical, de-skilled, boring, artificial, depressing, suicide-prompting, used up, drug-ridden, ugly, anxiety-causing and futureless brings a questioning as to why it has come to this/what's it all about?

Leftism and its superficial program is nearly extinct. Its adherents have folded their tents of manipulation and, in some cases, moved on to far more interesting adventures.

Anarchism, if not yet anarchy, is the only scene going, even if the blackout on the subject is still in effect. As if to match

the accelerating decomposition of society and displacement of life at large, determined resistance is also metamorphosing with some rapidity. The rout of the left, following the swiftly declining prestige of History, Progress and techno-salvation, is only one development. The old militants, with their ethic of sacrifice and order, their commitment to economy and exchange, are already fixed on the museum shelves of partial revolt.

Enter the Unabomber and a new line is being drawn. This time the bohemian schiz-fluxers, Green yuppies, hobbyist anarcho-journalists, condescending organizers of the poor, hip nihilist-aesthetes and all the other "anarchists" who thought their pretentious pastimes would go unchallenged indefinitely—well, it's time to pick which side you're on. It may be that here also is a Rubicon from which there will be no turning back.

Some, no doubt, would prefer to wait for a perfect victim. Many would like to unlearn what they know of the invasive and unchallenged violence generated everywhere by the prevailing order—in order to condemn the Unabomber's counter-terror.

But here is the man and the challenge before us.

Anarchists! One more effort if you would be enemies of this long nightmare!

Think for yourself. Act on your own.

-John Zerzan

Anarchist press review

Compiled by Lawrence Jarach, J. McQuinn & Alex Trotter

news an opinion from an anti-porn, leftist-feminist perspective. Issue #8 includes a brief history of the (now quarter-century-old) U.S. women's news journals *Off Our Backs* by Angela Johnson, an interview with Vi Subversa (formerly of the anarcho-punk band Poison Girls), and an interview with Tracy Chandler (one of the authors of *Lesbians Talk Violent Relationships*) on abusive lesbian relationships in the U.K. Every issue always includes pages and pages of short women's news updates from around the world. Check this out! Subscriptions are £10/6 issues (IMO/checks in Sterling only).

BLIND AND LOST

Vol.1, #4 (POB 332, Albert St., North Quay, Brisbane 4002 Australia; e-mail: anarcho@byteback.pana.org.au) Tabloid, 12 pages. Leave Uranium in the Ground, for the human species against ethnic and nationalist loyalties, Burma's opium wars, pot protests, anarcho-colonialism. No price listed. [AT]

BREAKOUT

March 1997 (Soli-komitee Italian, c/o Infocaden, Breisacherstr. 12, 81667 München, Germany) "Information regarding anarchists in Italy and elsewhere"; more specifically, regarding anarchist prisoners. Includes contact addresses. Price: DM 3. [AT]

BULLETIN OF THE KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY

#11/1997 (KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an 8-page newsletter "dedicated to countering the distortion and lies that pass for the history of Anarchism" in order to "give the anarchist movement a true view of its origins." This issue provides information on a few unknown and little-known anarchists, including Jaime Balus (editor of the Friends of Durruti group's *El Amigo del Pueblo* in revolutionary Spain), Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri and others. There is good, solid historical information in each issue which can't be found anywhere else. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

ANARCHIST INFORMATION BULLETIN ON GREECE

#5 thru #7 (A/Coil, c/o George Vlassopoulos, POB 30658, Athens 10033 Greece) Chronicles of hell-raising in Hellas, each about 10 pages or so. No price listed. Send a trade or something. [AT]

A NEWS: INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM GREECE

#16/April-June 1997 (POB 30577, Athens 10033 Greece) "The social war goes on." 8 pages. No price listed. Send something (?). [AT]

BAD ATTITUDE

#8/Autumn-Winter '95 (121 Raiton Road, London SE24 QLR, U.K.) is an energetic, 24-page "Radical Women's Newspaper" in an oversized tabloid magazine format, featuring international

than reading about the standard old & new leftist illusions concerning electoralism, social democracy, trade unions, nationalization, etc. still being produced by the remaining publications of the political left. Send \$7 or £7 for a 4-issue subscription.

COMMUNIST HEADACHE

Notes for Working and Living #4/Spring & #5/Autumn '96 (c/o Black Star, POB 446, Sheffield S1 1NY, England) "are the latest issues of this intensely serious yet witty 28-page zine.

In the Spring issue the publisher provides something of a self-analysis while expressing his disaffections with the radical libertarian milieu in England, and his attempts to make some headway in criticizing predominant perspectives like the workism of the anarcho-syndicalists and the "waiting for the crisis" mentality of libertarian communists. He faces some of the same problems North American radicals face, and asks some of the same questions we should be asking ourselves. This issue also includes a brilliant little sketch framed around "Agent Fox Mulder" and his "X-Files" that deserves a much wider exposure. Issue #5 includes an interesting analysis of Charles Bukowski's critique of work in his novels *Post Office* and *Factotum*, unfortunately in excruciatingly small type. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

CONTRAFLOW

#22 (c/o 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton St., London SE17, England; e-mail: contraflow.london@omiga.comlink.de) "European counternetwork," tabloid, 4 large pages. Carnival of the Oppressed, trashing New Labour, victory to the Bougainville revolutionary army, Swedish feminists assaulted by police, anti-road, Spanish squatters arrested, lots of other news items. Free, but donations appreciated. [AT]

CRASH & BURN

#2/Spring 1997 (Leif Fredrickson, Mairdorp 1818, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12604) Xeroxed zine, 16 pages, consisting of an essay entitled "Culturcide," concerning issues of alienation, culture vs. nature, and arbitrary vs. nonarbitrary games, plus commentary on the themes of the essay from the author himself and others. Welcomes letters, art, and essay contributions. Price: 2 postage stamps. [AT]

DEMOCRACY & NATURE

#9 (1449 W. Littleton Blvd., Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80120) Journal formerly known as *Society and Nature*, 222 pages. Devoted to "economic democracy and green economics." This issue: environmental sustainability and trade, marxism and ecology, Murray Bookchin

resigns from the advisory board. Subscription: \$22/year U.S.A., \$28 Canada. [AT]

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

#82/Mar-April thru #84/July-Aug '97 (POB 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501) is a 32-page assortment of letters and reprinted articles primarily from the anti-market, non-statist radical milieu. The March-April issue includes some rather charitable reviews of Murray Bookchin's scurrilous & poorly argued rant on *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism*, while the July-Aug. issue is notable for a reprint from *The Poor, the Bad, and the Angry* on the "Progress/ Anti-Progress Debate," as well as for editor Frank Girard's amazingly obtuse review of Bob Black's important new book (from C.A.L. Press), *Anarchy after Leftism*. Subscriptions are \$3/year (6 issues). [J.M.]

EARTH FIRST!

March-April 1997 (POB 1415, Eugene, OR 97440) Eponymous journal of the EFi movement, tabloid, 40 pages. This issue: the legacy of Judi Bari, army nerve gas, cloning, cleanup force at Hanford, logging in Eastern Europe, Belize, and U.S.A., endangered species, cross-cultural organizing, luddism for today. Price: \$4 Canada, \$3.50 U.S./single issue; \$25/sub. [AT]

EARTH FIRST! ACTION UPDATE

#38/April '97 (Dept. 29, 1 Newton St., Manchester M1 1HW England) 30pp. The anti-copyright journal of direct action environmentalists in the UK. Concise reports of various European eco-defenders' activities, with announcements of future demonstrations against road extensions, the building of runways, the dumping of nuclear waste, the incursions of genetic engineering, etc. Always includes small flyers and an international contact list. [L.J.]

FLAMING FLAG

#2-#4/undated (POB 102, Columbia, MO 65205) is a 12 to 18-page photocopied anarchist zine published by & far high-school-aged kids. The latest issue includes short pieces like "An Essay on Anarchism" by Ryan Peterson, the anonymous "Ideology of Atheism," and the second part of Diabolo's "What is Anarchy?" Send a contribution for a sample copy.

FREEDOM

Anarchist Fortnightly Vol.58, #16/Aug 16 thru #17/Sept.6, '97 (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England) is a long-running 8-page tabloid of anarchist news and comment, primarily focussing on all things British, but also taking on international social struggles as well. Issue #16 includes anti-workfare pieces, and a long review of Brian Bamford's *The Tradition of Workers' Control: Selected Writings by Geoffrey Ostergard*, along with a bizarre review of *Anarchy* magazine (giving almost no indication of the magazine's editorial perspective or contents, while complaining at length about the serial reprinting of Raoul Vaneigem's important *The Revolution of Everyday Life*). Subscriptions are £18.00/year (24 issues).

HEAD

#7/undated (BM Uplift, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an incredibly packed, unpaginated zine with a huge amount of information, reprints of subversive posters, calls to action, visionary comics, etc., from "unemployed heads who don't want to waste our lives in a dead end system." A lot more zines could use this level of quality in their signal to noise ratios. This one is "The Sex Issue," and it's loaded with information, tips and titillations like Jack Morin's "10 Rules of Anal Sex," an interview with Collin Brown on Body Electric—his school for erotic massage, a story of love without contracts titled "Love in the Boudoir," a quick interview with Hakim Bey, Steve Wilson's "Sexual Mysticism in Theory and Practice," and much, much more. See for yourself while they're still available. Sample copies are \$10 or £3.50 cash (postpaid).

THE HOLY BILE

#8/undated (515-916 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1K7, Canada) is an effective, humorous & healthy, (though often bilious, as advertised) dose of corrosive critique aimed at all the forces which keep people in ignorance, especially religion! This issue includes an editorial titled "The Deficit Diatribe: Exposing the Hoax," a great comic titled "Selling Yourself," Monserat Ravachol's amusing "The Cosmic Countdown Has Begun: UFO Cults and the End of the World," Mickey Z's take on a *New York Times* report of a typical Clinton speech, and comically astute commentaries in which "The Angry Little Man Translates the Bible" & "The Angry Little Man Reads between the Lines," along with a hilarious review by Eva Six of an old book titled *The Sex Lives of Famous People*. Check this one out! Sample copies are a great deal at \$2 postpaid. And there's also a Best-of compilation of selections from issues #1 thru #7 available for \$2.

INFINITE OUNION

#14/Jan. 1997 (c/o T.M., POB 1032, Colorado Springs, CO 80901) Tabloid, 12 pages, with punk graphic style. Alternative economies, politics of theft, kids' power in Copenhagen, Berlin squat evictions, prisoner contacts. Send small contact. [AT]

THE MATCH!

#91/Winter '96-97 (POB 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702) is an irregularly-published 92 to 116-page anarchist journal, lovingly self-printed by the always cantankerous editor/publisher Fred Woodworth. The articles in these issues continue to focus on the rampant abuses heaped upon innocent people by authoritarian institutions, especially by cops, courts and prisons. In issue #91 the editor spins his own unlikely (but still possible) theory on the whereabouts of former American Atheists organizational head Madalyn Murray O'Hair who mysteriously disappeared over a year ago with two other members of her family (he thinks they're being groomed by Hustler publisher Larry Flynt as his successors). Every issue continues the very well-done serializations of Iris Lane's fiction "The Two Sisters," Kent Winslow's "Landmarks in the Desert,"



and Paul Roasberry's "Teaching Pigs to Whistle." Subscriptions are well worth the \$10/4 issues (cash preferred) if the often grouchy tone of this zine doesn't put you off.

NOT BORED!

#27/May 1997 (POB 1115, New York, NY 10009; e-mail: rose@thorn.net) Pro-situ fanzine, 60 pages. Material about recent and ongoing events in New York City, including NB's campaign against the MTA's metrocard, review of October magazine's special issue on the situationists, and translation of Debord and Wolman's "Why Lettrism," among others. No price listed. [AT]

PASSION BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

Embracing the lesbian and gay freedom movement #12 (LGFMB Box 207 London WC1N 3XX England) 40p. A 36-page pamphlet size zine with no staples. News and views on topics relating to sex—lots of sex—in every possible combination of bodies, temperaments, and identities. It has a very non-moralistic tone, and is accepting of all perspectives, since they publish just about anything that members and supporters send them. Fantasies, poems, a report on a meeting attended by members of Class War, Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement, Feminists Against Censorship and others and what they discussed, as well as media reviews are included. An interesting mix, but there is little explicitly anarchist in it that I could find; it seems that

the idea of consent is the meeting ground between anarchy and sexual liberation for the Passion Brigade, but this could just as easily be the meeting ground for sex-lib and the ACLU. Still, sex is a wonderful topic for discussion as it relates to things anarcho, and this zine is a nicely informal place for such a discussion to take place. [L.J.]

PROFANE EXISTENCE

#32/Summer 1997 (POB 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408) Anarcho-punk magazine, 48 pages, newsprint. Solidarity with Chiapas rebels in Mexico, Chaos Days in Garmoney, scene report from Bulgaria, Belgian squatters, plus plenty of band reviews \$2/single copy; \$12/sub (six issues). [AT]

SAMIZDAT ANONYMOUS

#1 (Black Bread Press, POB 500, Moscow 107061 Russia; e-mail: cube@glasnet.ru) Photocopied zine, 28 pages. Against work and technology, bashing Murray Bookchin, revolutionary aspects of proletarian shopping, boycotting the millennium, sex trainer for elite party women (this one hilarious). Some real trenchant stuff here, better than most little zines. Send gifts (not money) to help keep this project going. [AT]

SHIT HAPPY

#4/undated (Adam Bregman, 11338 Joffre St., L.A., CA 90049) is another rollicking issue of this must-see 32-page zine. This time Adam Bregman checks in with "A Brief Guide to L.A.," an account of his summer vacation in

Israel & Europe, three steamy short stories, and more hilarious accounts of his costumed adventures in "Klowns! Klowns! Klowns! Klowns!" (see APR #3 for a sample of his clown madness). Send at least \$2 for a zine that may well lighten up your day!

TEMP SLAVE

#9/undated (POB 8284, Madison, WI 53708) is a sometimes thoughtful, sometimes mischievous, sometimes hilarious look at temp workers and the corporate slavers who employ them. In issue #9 publisher Keffo describes his experiences with his first job, going to college, his workaholic father's early death, and his recent temporary escape from work for six months in Ireland. Also included in this issue is a reprint of Tom Wheeler's excellent diatribe "Pissing on the Work Ethic," an interesting review of *Power and Greed: Inside the Teamsters Empire of Corruption*, and Keffo's hilarious rant about using the word "Fuck!" This zine is always worth a look, and this issue is probably the best ever! Send \$3 cash for a copy today, or \$8 for a 3-issue subscription before it's too late.

TERMINAL BOREDOM

(121 Raiton Rd., Brixton SE24 London, England) Booklet, 10 pages, droning about the death culture of contemporary civilization. Illustrated with collages. In favor of Groucho Marx and wimmin with wide thighs and round asses. Send a trade. [AT]

WAR CRIME

#6 (POB 2741, Tucson, AZ 85702) Newsprint zine, 46 pages, published by a guy who is "trying to encourage people to extend DIY ethics to all facets of their lives." Earth's hilarious rant about using the word "Fuck!" This zine is always worth a look, and this issue is probably the best ever! Send \$3 cash for a copy today, or \$8 for a 3-issue subscription before it's too late.

WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE

#4/May 1997 (Venomous Butterfly Publications, 828 Royal St. #605, New Orleans, LA 70016) Egoist and artwork zine, 20 pages. A passionate appeal to steal from work, against fake "unity" among anarchists, technology as limit to human creativity, plus lots of short news items from the front in the war against authority. Send at least a couple stamps to cover postage. [AT]

ZAGINFLATCH

#9 (zap/ark, gajeva 55, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia) Newsletter of the Zagreb anarchist movement. Conscientious objectors in Croatia, protests in Serbia, anti-McDonald's, freedom of the press. No price listed, send a trade or contrib. [AT]

Non-English-language materials received

BUITEN DE ORDE

Winter '97 (c/o LAS Postbus 1610, 6501 BP Nijmegen, Netherlands) The quarterly organ of the Free Union (anarchosyndicalists) of the Netherlands. 14.50. In Dutch. [L.J.]

Alternative Media Review

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES SUR L'ANARCHISME
Bulletin 53/March 1997 (Bibliothèque du C.I.R.A., avenue de Beaumont 24, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland) Catalog of periodicals and new book acquisitions in various languages, predominantly French and Spanish. Sub: 10 FF/year. [AT]

CNT
Organ of the National Confederation of Labor
#222/May '97 (C/ Molinos, 64 18009 Granada, Spain) The monthly paper of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union. Lead article against the labor reform supported by the UGT (Socialist Party trade union) and the CCOO (the CP union). An article about Mujeres Libres, the anarchist women's organization active during the revolution of 1936. Announcement of the start of a libertarian video archive/library, beginning with "Land and Freedom" and "Manufacturing Consent". In Spanish. Price: 200 pesetas/single issue; 5,000 pstas/12 issues (to the Americas). [L.J.]

DE NAR
#127/April & #128/May '97 (Postbus 104 B-1210 Brussels 21, Belgium) Almost monthly (ten times a year) Belgian magazine. Articles on feminism and anarchism, unions and work, Belgian fascists, technocracy, and the situationists. Also an events calendar. In Flemish. 70 Belgian francs. [L.J.]

EKINTZA ZUZENA
(Ediciones E.Z., Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbao, Spain) 64-page magazine mostly in Spanish, with some articles in Basque. Antimilitarist, "neoruralism," reviews of anarcho-punk music. US \$25/four issues. [AT]

EL ACRATADOR
#57 & #58/May & June 1997 (Apdo. 3141, 50080 Zaragoza, Spain) "Bulletin of Antagonist Communication," 16 small pages, in Spanish. Lots of antifascist stuff, solidarity with Tupac Amaru, ecology, Basque situation. Subscription is 500 pesetas for 10 issues (no price given in U.S. currency). [AT]

IFA BULLETIN
Dec '96 (145 rue Amelot 75011 Paris, France) An irregular zine of the International of Anarchist Federations, with reports from various affiliated groups in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Norway. A short history of the IFA is included, plus articles about the suppression of the journal Démocratie in Quebec, the Russian war in Chechnia, the EZLN, and the A-Infos project. In English, French, Italian, Spanish, and a poem in Portuguese. No price listed. [L.J.]

LE LIBERTAIRE
#175/April 1997 (25 rue Duménil d'Aplemont 7600 Le Havre, France) Six large pages, in French. This issue: history of syndicalism, Mahkno, surreal cinema of Jan Svankmajer. Price: 9

FF/single issue; 100 FF/ten issues (international). [AT]

LIBERECANA LIGLO
#89/Winter '97 (67 av. Gambetta 75020 Paris, France) Jointly published in France and Brazil, this bulletin has an analysis of capitalism, the repression of Italian anarchists, a report on the 20th congress of the AIT. In Esperanto. [L.J.]

NAPEREKOR
#6/Summer 1997 (POB 500, Moscow 107061, Russia) In Russian, 74 pages. "The angry issue" includes anarchist news from around the world, articles on Albania, Belarus, and communist experiments in Italy. P. Ryabov's "Anarchist Letters," Direct Action Communiqué, a history of FOA, Laure A's "20 yrs. of Anarchy," interview with Katherine Rot, special fiction section. US \$5.00 or trade. [L.J.]

PERSPECTIEF
#46/Jan.-March 1997 (Francis Faes, Draenenstraat 21, B-9000 Gent, Belgium) Dutch language anarchist journal, 60 pages. Articles on reformism, utopia, Kropotkin as scientist, Bob Black's "Abolition of Work" in translation. Price: 100 BF/single issue; 400 BF/four issues. [AT]

SCHWARZER FADEN
#59/Fall '96 (PF 1159 D-71117 Grafenau, Germany) A quarterly journal of lust and freedom from some German anarchists. A very slickly produced but

dry collection of essays, book reviews, and history. Included in this issue are articles about the awful working conditions of workers on a banana plantation in Costa Rica that's owned by a German baby food company, yet another translation of the EZLN program for electoral reform in Mexico (when will anarchists end their overly romantic honeymoon with them?), a discussion of international finance capital, and an obituary of Albert Meltzer. The most interesting looking article is on the history of anarchist youth in a German town from 1929-1945. In German. 8DM. [L.J.]

SIN DIOS
#2 (Rubisel c.c. a/p-398-54701, Cuautitlan Izcalli, Edo. de Mexico, Mexico) Punk zine in Spanish, 16 pages. Articles on vegetarianism, homosexuality, land and property, animal liberation. No price listed. Send trade. [AT]

SOLIDARIDAD OBRERO
Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor of Catalunya
#270/March '97 (Via Augusta, 2 08911 Badalona, Spain) The monthly paper of the Catalan regional federation of the CNT. Articles concerning International Women's Day, the 20th congress of the AIT (anarcho-syndicalist international), a listing of lectures and places to hang out, plus an attack on the labor reform sponsored by the Socialist Party. In Spanish. 100 pesetas. [L.J.]

member of the Situationist International, Sanguinetti was directly involved with radical worker groups in Italy, and his highly polemical books have been translated into numerous languages. Button seems to be unaware that Sanguinetti is the author of the most radical political hoax ever written and omits him from his *Handbook*.

Despite its disappointments, which include the predictable historical introduction, the *Handbook* is a welcome addition to one's bookshelf as a reference to all the remarkable people in this world who have fought for, and are still fighting for, radical change—from Steve Biko to Ito Noe to many more people I have never heard of before. As always when confronted with a major work such as this, I remind myself not to be overly critical until I have created something better myself. As far as I know, no reference like this *Handbook*, with its global perspective, exists—the only thing that comes close is Buhle and Georgakakos's highly recommended *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, which is, as implied by its title, limited to the USA. Get *The Radicalism Handbook* and send entries of your favorite radical to the author for future editions, or better yet, write your own book. Better still, bring people together and stage a historical operation of your own and communicate the example. You might make a difference, even if you don't make Button's cut.

The Radicalism Handbook

Reviewed by Len Bracken

The Radicalism Handbook: A Complete Guide to the Radical Movement in the Twentieth Century by John Button (Cassell, London, England, 1996) 460pp. \$21.95 paper.

When I think back to my early twenties, when I was still groping for ideas that could account for the world in more realistic ways than the dominant paradigms, I recall the way I was drawn in many diverse directions. I didn't always have access to an adequate library, so a book such as Button's *Handbook* might've come in handy—the entries could've served as a brief reminder of a given thinker's line of thought or spurred more interest in a given movement. That said, the *Handbook* has serious limitations.

The bulk of the book isn't about "radicalism" so much as figures who are, more or less, radical—the biographical sketches of the poets, witches, priests, academics, mystics, politicians and peace activists, etc. who Button values for their radicalism. Every author is entitled to define his topic, but only an odd book on radicalism would include Christopher Lasch rather than, say, Joe Hill; Bertrand Russell rather than Anton Pannekoek; etc. These biographical sketches are only rarely critical, and

therefore give the impression of being under-informed. For example, nothing is said of Gloria Steinem's by now well known collaboration with the CIA, and Daniel Ortega's corruption is glossed over by means of an indirect reference to nepotism.

The global scope of the book, bringing together the likes of Wei Jingsheng, C.L.R. James and Bertolt Brecht, is without doubt the book's greatest attribute. But this scope makes many of the omissions all the more glaring. For example, the relatively small "Movements and Groups" section makes no mention of the legendary POUM in the Spanish Civil War that was so well depicted by Ken Loach in his film *Land and Freedom* and in Victor Alba's book on the movement. The discussion of May 1968 in Paris is altogether inadequate—it fails to mention Lefebvre, Castoriadis, Vaneigem, Debord (or any of the Situationists). No mention is made of the revolutionary events that took place in Yugoslavia or Portugal in the wake of 1968. Nor does an important economic theorist and protagonist in Italian radical politics such as Toni Negri merit mention in Button's book. Due to his theory and work with the American journal *ZeroWork*, Negri is an international figure, as is his fellow Italian, Gianfranco Sanguinetti. A

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Break-out from the Crystal Palace

Reviewed by Alex Trotter

Break-out from the Crystal Palace, The Anarcho-Psychological Critique: Stirner, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky by John Carroll (Routledge, London & Boston, 1974) 188pp. £4.50 hardcover.

This book, probably out of print, is an intriguing comparative study of these three important thinkers that also discusses how their ideas influenced and clashed with those of other titans such as Marx and Freud. Marx's famous attack on Stirner in *The German Ideology*, which occupies center stage in Carroll's study, is analyzed at length. The most important aspect of *Break-out...* is its recognition of the psychological dimension of anarchism beyond its more familiar appearance as political ideology.

Carroll starts by presenting what he calls "anarcho-psychology" as one of three principal intellectual traditions inherited from the nineteenth century, the other two being liberal-rationalism (British utilitarianism) and marxist socialism. The collectivist forms of political anarchism (e.g., Proudhon, Kropotkin) are viewed here as part of the socialist or "social-liberal" tradition. Fascism and conservatism are generally excluded from this study but are mentioned here and there *en passant*, mainly in relation to the Nazis' appropriation of Nietzsche.

Forerunners and influences, acknowledged or not, of Stirner, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky include Goethe, Fourier, William Blake, Hegel, Feuerbach, and (in Nietzsche's case) Schopenhauer.

The anarcho-psychological critique is divided into three elements: the critique of ideology; the critique of positivism, empiricism, and even knowledge itself (ontological anarchism); and the critique of economic man.

Stirner, even before Nietzsche, proclaimed the death of God. The attack on Christianity is

the primary target of his critique of ideology in *The Ego and His Own*. God is the supreme "fixed idea," but the abstraction of humanism as a substitute for God serves just as ill for independent thought and liberated emotions. Feuerbach, the principal theorist of the Young Hegelians, wrote in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) that Man, in a crisis of identity, seeks an alter ego in God, which is but the alienated (the term *alienation* coming from Rousseau by way of Hegel) universal essence of Man. In this way theology becomes anthropology, a kind of religion of Humanity, in Feuerbach's philosophy. This metaphysical concept came under attack from two critics, both also from the milieu of the Young Hegelians—Marx (historical materialism) and Stirner (egoism/individualist psychology).

Stirner was not satisfied with the rationalist Voltairean critique of religion. He wanted to discover the psychological underpinnings of religious belief and the individual's subordination to its dictates. Not content with recognizing that there is no "reason" to believe in God, he asks, Why is God necessary? What *hidden* needs are served by religion? Stirner's effort to pierce the veils of ideology, with the self-deception it entails, and discover the authentic self started the piecing together of a theory of human behavior.

Carroll sees Stirner as having anticipated Adorno's notion of the "authoritarian personality" with his own analysis of internalized authority, summed up in his statement about every Prussian carrying a gendarme in his own breast. It is also an anticipation of Freud's description of the superego as the image of parental (paternal) authority and of W. Reich's concept of the "emotional plague." The materialist view of authority as a strictly external force of coercion (e.g., Engels' "bodies of armed

men" who enforce the will of the state as executive arm of the bourgeois class) is inadequate.

Marx and Stirner probably never met. Marx's *German Ideology*, the greater part of which was written as a polemic against Stirner, was completed in 1846, though it was not published as a whole until 1932. Stirner criticized socialist and communist ideals in general; Marx, on the other hand, targeted Stirner directly and personally. What is interesting to note is that Stirner served as a major formative, albeit negative, influence on Marx. Marx's attack on Stirner finds a twentieth-century echo in Lukács' critique of Nietzsche.

Marx's criticisms of Stirner can be summarized as follows: 1) Stirner offers a history of ideas without reference to actual events and the social environment in which they take place. 2) The individual is an abstract concept without meaning in the context of society. 3) Stirner's position is ideological because it doesn't understand the determining role of material forces in history. Individualism is seen as an ideology of the petty bourgeoisie.

Although some aspects of these objections are not without merit, Marx mistakenly saw Stirner as an idealist philosopher in the sense represented by Hegel (i.e., one who strives speculatively to understand the nature of Man and the whole of history). In Stirner's view, there are ideas and subjective desires that do not merely reflect the social environment and the action of groups. Engels (who initially thought favorably of *The Ego and His Own*) and Marx didn't know, in a sense, how to respond to the irrationalist core of Stirner's outlook except by labeling it religious. Marx put it thus: "In revolutionary activity the changing of oneself coincides with the changing of circumstances." He thought that with Stirner, rebellion takes place



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only in the mind, that ideas alone can change property relations and make history. Can the state, money, and private property be simply willed out of existence? Marx and Engels decide that individual interests undergo no alienation through identification with the revolutionary class, and that an egoist's insurrection achieves little against the organized power of the capitalist system. Stirner does not deny that humans are conditioned by their environment. But he points out that only when a person goes beyond social identity and roles does uniqueness and creativity begin. Stirner does not pretend to expound a total social theory. He charges that socialism and communism represent new abstract goals to which real individuals and their desires will be sacrificed.

Egoism or mutual aid—is there an irreconcilable antagonism between the two? There is, says Carroll, if each is taken as an Absolute or a categorical imperative. Carroll touches on, but does not tackle, the attempted synthesis of Marx and Stirner in what has been called "communist egoism." Unlike marxist scholar Paul Thomas, who in *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* clearly sided with the Grand Old Man, he allows that Herr S. and Herr M. both scored points in the encounter. He says in Stirner's favor that the debate should not be seen as a simple question of the isolated individual versus society. Here Carroll makes a parallel with the distinction made by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies between *Gesellschaft* (commercial society at large) and *Gemeinschaft* (community). Stirner's concept of the Union of Egoists, conceived as coming under the latter category, embraces, according to the ethic of friendship, only small groups where real face-to-face relationships are possible while rejecting the imperative to sacrifice one's own interests for an abstract social totality, such as nation, race, or class.

In modern times, the egoist/Übermensch has found an embodiment in the lives of certain artists; one in particular, German-born dadaist and surrealist Max Ernst, felt a special affinity with Stirner. Both Stirner and Nietzsche praised creativity and play. The early Marx would have largely agreed. But after 1844, Marx turned his attention increasingly toward the descriptive analysis of political economy, and away from questions of the poetic, ludic realization of human liberty, and the alienating quality of labor itself. He started thinking of his project as a scientific one and believed, in utilitarian fashion, that a rational social order could be achieved. Carroll speculates that the obsessive character of the Stirner section of the *German Ideology* indicated a great unresolved inner conflict within Marx, who used Stirner as the external object or scapegoat to cover up his own bad conscience for not taking up the cause of *Homo ludens* as seriously as he could have.

If Stirner was the early pioneer of psychology, Carroll believes that Nietzsche was a more mature thinker who "superseded" him. Carroll compares Stirner's ideal of self-realization with that of the *Bildungsroman*. Education, conceived as the exploration and understanding of one's own feelings, is a ceaseless process of becoming that is not beholden to ready-made

responses. Nietzsche's and Freud's advances consisted in a greater appreciation of the complexity of the individual psyche. In Freud's metaphor, it is an iceberg, with the conscious part making up only the visible summit. Nietzsche likened the I to a bridge on which traffic is constantly in motion. The unconscious self Freud, following Groddeck, called the It (usually

and perhaps inadequately translated as the Id). The ego grows in the matrix of instinctual needs that make up the It. The drive to form relationships is, in Freud's view, secondary, and love has an inherently narcissistic foundation.

The superego is the other element of Freud's tripartite model of the psyche. Here is the repository of ideology, of civilization and its



Illustration by Max Ernst

demands. The egoist in Stirner's sense is a hedonist who believes that everything is possible and does not recognize the limits of what Freud called the reality-principle. Carroll believes that Stirner had a naive optimism concerning the compatibility of individual maturity and gratified desire. In Freud's view, self-understanding is achieved through a series of traumatic life-events. Maturity is defined as becoming one's own center of gravity. Nietzsche also held that psychological constraints are inherent in the human condition. He (and Kierkegaard) took up a theme that had appeared in Hegel—that anxiety lies at the root of consciousness and is not, as Stirner tended to see it, identified solely with repression and morality. Goethe was the prototype of the Übermensch that Nietzsche had in mind; it was Goethe's great discipline and self-mastery that Nietzsche admired, his Apollonian control of strong (Dionysian) passions.

On the other hand, Stirner's egoist is more democratic than Nietzsche's elitist Übermensch (who is more stoic, even ascetical). For Stirner, everyone has the resources to achieve greatness. Enjoyment is conceived as refined hedonism and is linked to aestheticism (Stirner favors craftsmanship over industrial manufacture). The individualist rebel is at odds with civilization, but is inextricably part of it; the individual is a cultural-historical phenomenon, not a purely instinctual, natural being. Freud, like Marx, had a scientific rationalism for a superego, which was the source of much of his conservative side (e.g., his justification of the necessity for instinctual repression to make civilization function).

Stirner's time was the early Romantic period, before the Industrial Revolution had hit the German-speaking world, but he knew English and, through his acquaintance with Adam Smith's writings, which he translated into German, he was aware of industrialism's conquering power in Britain. Nietzsche and Freud lived in a world where science and technology were much more visibly triumphant but whose very discoveries (e.g., the law of thermodynamic entropy) started to undermine rationalist and positivist certainties and probably helped provoke the mood of late Romantic pessimism.

The anarcho-psychologists rejected one of the greatest assumptions of the nineteenth century. Progress, and were very skeptical about scientific materialism. Of the three, Dostoyevsky staked out the most extreme criticism of science and technology. He accused empirical natural science of withering human instincts and retarding human creative powers. Can the emotions be calculated and quantified? he asks. What makes us human is not how useful we are, but how superfluous. In his novels, characters find themselves in situations where they are overwhelmed by elemental passions and do not have occasion to be self-reflective or analytical.

In 1862 Dostoyevsky visited London during an exhibition that featured a structure called the Crystal Palace, which was built as a showcase of all the latest machinery, technology, and emblems of progress. The Russian writer saw

the Crystal Palace as a symbol of the bourgeois utilitarian paradise that the Western world had become—a world where the passions were pacified, risk and the tragic sense of life eliminated, and the human being reduced to a domesticated automaton consumer. The killing boredom of this sleep of Reason produces monsters of nihilism and cruelty. The denizen, or inmate, of the Crystal Palace is what Nietzsche called "the last man," the bourgeois (and the bourgeoisified worker) who pays for comfort with boredom, adopts a herd mentality, and is hostile to spontaneous curiosity and imagination.

Dostoyevsky was only a briefly an anarchist. His critique of modernity reached the point of extreme conservatism, slavophilism, and the hope for a renewed Christianity. In *The Possessed* he bitterly criticized anarchism of all varieties. His mysticism puts him at odds with Stirner and Nietzsche. Dostoyevsky's worldview is distilled into the "Grand Inquisitor" section of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The Grand Inquisitor is a consummate politician, a paternalistic scientific materialist and social engineer, shepherd of a human herd to whom he metes out the calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number by dispensing bread and circuses. On the other side is Christ, who responds, inexplicably, to the Grand Inquisitor's indictments with a kiss (the anarchist?).

The section dealing with anarcho-psychology's critique of knowledge is the most difficult part of the book. Individualist psychology repudiates the notion of absolute truth (Truth is another oppressive abstraction like God or Man). The attack on truth, though, also attacks the very process of critical reflection. Nietzsche upholds paradoxical over formal logic. The Will is seen as more important than Reason. Knowledge is primarily subjective and has limits; it annihilates itself on one plane even as it establishes itself on another. In other words, the only certain knowledge is that there is no certainty. Things can be known only as they are conditioned by the cognitive process. His theory of knowledge is perspectivist; it rejects monism and holds room for plural and competing cosmologies. Nietzsche saw far, perhaps too far, into the schizophrenic condition of a life torn between competing, and incompatible, principles. Such a condition can reach the point, as it did for Nietzsche, where reason as the mediator of personal experiences breaks down.

Dostoyevsky also felt that the individual life is unknowable by objective, positivist science. He could grant that the knowledge of mathematics and natural science is true in a sense, but he wanted to know what the psychological, existential effects of such truths were. He feared that rationalist empiricism was robbing the world of all enchantment, and that passions were threatened by the attempt to pin them down by scientific laws. The tree of knowledge and the tree of life seem to grow apart; Goethe's Faust laments his long years of academic study because he feels they have taught him nothing about life and its enjoyment.

Carroll speaks of the importance of placing intellectuals and their works in historical context.

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"We have, in traversing the past, only to do with what is present" (Hegel). Stirner in 1844, he says, does not mean the same thing as Stirner in 1972 (the year of this book's writing)—and we could add, for that matter, Stirner in 1997. As Stirner himself put it, how his readers (who are historical subjects in their unique individuality) decide to apply his thoughts to their own lives is their own affair. Carroll's verdict on Stirner's brand of here-and-now egoism is that it is suited primarily to a marginal or bohemian life outside the mainstream of society, in part because of its rejection of organized politics, and that's pretty accurate. Stirner was not a nihilist, because he had personal, if not social, values. And although Nietzsche is also often associated with nihilism, he was engaged in a constant search for the "revaluation of values."

Carroll mentions the failures of marxism, but not those of psychoanalysis. He seems to make too much of the three protagonists as forerunners of mid-twentieth-century existentialism. And what about the revolutionary passions of the 1960s so recent at the time Carroll wrote this book? He mentions Adorno, Marcuse, and other luminaries of the Frankfurt School; Wilhelm Reich; and Norman O. Brown. The more radical currents of that time (e.g., the Situationists and the Dutch Provos) are not considered: Carroll merely makes a reference or two to the insurgent French students of 1968. Here again "yet another effort" toward the synthesis of social revolution and individualist insurrection is necessary. The concept of the egoist as artistic creator can be augmented by the surrealist notion of the "communism of genius" or the situationist slogan "art made by all or not at all": an aesthetic that is realized not in artworks but in a life of passion and rebellion.

Break-out from the Crystal Palace is excessively academic and sociological. The social, or "soft," sciences no less than the physical, or "hard," sciences, can be criticized from the positions elaborated by the subjects of this book. Were Stirner, Nietzsche, or Dostoyevsky alive today, it seems likely they would not be particularly pleased with contemporary sociology and psychology any more than they would be with all the other fragmented specialisms that make up the knowledge of modern civilization, which has moved with baneful and painful absurdity even further along precisely the lines they so presciently critiqued.

The question of fascism is touched on only lightly. Early fascism certainly tapped in to the *Lebensphilosophie* prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, with which the anarcho-psychological critique was associated, and bent it to its own purposes (i.e., the Victorian British commercial utilitarianism lambasted by Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky was now contrasted unfavorably with the supposedly more vital and naturalistic Teutonic culture). Stirner, who, like Sorel, had considered prevailing society senile and in need of fresh, invigorating passions, appealed to the young Mussolini and to the French intellectual aesthete fascist Robert Brasillach (see William Tucker's *The Fascist Ego*). Carroll rightly exonerates Nietzsche of

Continued on next page

Guy Debord—Revolutionary

Reviewed by John Zerzan

Guy Debord—Revolutionary by Len Bracken (Feral House, 2532 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 359, Venice CA 90021, 1997) 267pp. \$14.95 paper.

In the mid-90s Len Bracken edited and published *Extraphile*, a very lively and very Debordian magazine. When I heard of his biography of Debord, "the first in any language," I frankly wondered whether it would merit the additional claim, that of being a critical biography.

It was my pleasure to discover that Bracken has indeed managed some critical distance from his subject, and has produced a most substantial intellectual biography. It is, it should be noted right off, a treatment of Debord's political/philosophical project, not the story of his personal life. There is very little of the latter; his heavy drinking is referred to only in passing, for example, and his two marriages merely cited.

A couple of quibbles: the book does contain a few small errors that I found occasionally distracting. In the matter of dates, for example, we are told that poet Arthur Craven died in 1918 and, two paragraphs later, that he "disappeared in Mexico in 1920." Marx, it is recorded, died in 1883, which is twenty years premature. Later in the volume one reads of the German revolution of 1948, that Marx predicted in 1947; obviously a century late. Social theorist Lucien Goldmann and film-maker Jean-Luc Godard are misspelled throughout the book and in the index, as Goldman and Goddard.

And Bracken is not what I would call a prose

Break-out...

Continued from previous page

charge of protofascist tendencies (he and Stirner both unambiguously denounced German and pan-German nationalism), but the quite real Nazi connections of Nietzsche's dubious intellectual heir Heidegger are not examined.

And, as the book was published in 1974, it says nothing about the phenomenon of postmodernism, which has also laid claim to the mantle of Nietzsche's legacy.

But *Break-out...* provides much to ponder and wrestle with. It's an important book and definitely worth examining. In it Stirner, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky are presented as difficult, inspiring, and flawed champions of rebellion and the unceasing quest for self-understanding, self-realization, and new values. If it is true, as Carroll claims, that the critique of rationalist *Homo economicus* exploded into the open and into mass attitudes only after World War II, then the ideas of the "anarcho-psychologists" are, in some sense, in everyone's head, fueling the ongoing revolution of everyday life.

stylist. The writing is generally serviceable, at times a little better than that, but often clunky and occasionally opaque. For an example of the latter, I could not coax a clear meaning from this sentence: "Lukacs developed Marx's concept of fetishism with psychology and history into reification in large part by positing the proletariat as the subject-object of history."

Guy Debord (1931–1994) was the leading figure of the avant-garde Lettrist International of the 1950s and, more importantly, the central theoretician of the Situationist International (1957–1972). He and other Situationists, like the Surrealists twenty years earlier, sought to deepen their cultural critique by appropriations from Marxism. But while the Surrealists tried to strengthen their aesthetic protests, in the 1920s and '30s, via involvement in Leninist perspectives (Stalinism and then Trotskyism), Debord and his coterie brought in the relatively more libertarian variant of Marxism, council Communism.

Bracken refers to a rather autocratic style of Debord in the S.I., at least in passing, which is related to a larger, and undiscussed problem: a situationist fetish of organization. The fixation with internal organization was, in turn, connected to what Debord saw as the over-arching solution to the social question: the "absolute power of workers' councils." For his part, Bracken at least mentions the "apparent contradiction" between a councilist solution to alienation and the equally strong situationist emphasis on festival, play, enjoyment without restraint, etc. He writes that in this latter regard and in his personal life, Debord "didn't value work in the least." But it might have been fruitful to discuss the rather obvious tension between a unitary power based on the category of work, to which all issues would be submitted, and abundant rhetoric about an equally unrestricted focus on ludic individuality.

A great strength of the book is the background Bracken provides on the development of Debord's thinking. Very adequate thumbnail sketches of often difficult-to-condense influences (e.g. Hegel, Lukacs, Lefebvre) illuminate the sources of Debord's maturation as radical thinker and leader.

His treatment of his subject's masterwork, *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), is likewise strong. Proceeding carefully, Len Bracken sketches the complementary meanings of the concept of spectacle. If I were to advance a criticism here, it is only that this highly important work does not essentially escape its huge debt to Hegel and Marx, and that herein lie the grounds from which to discuss its limitations. When it is disclosed that life has somehow moved from being lived to being experienced as representation, a discussion of representation itself becomes possible, for example.

Of course, it is easy and maybe unfair to demand everything from a text written thirty

years ago, including, to cite another theme, at least a slight realization of the pitfalls, shall we say, of society as a machine for production and a technological construct. My own orientation, to be more positive, has been greatly aided by the odyssey of Guy Debord: I have been deeply moved by his works, especially the defiantly elegiac, brief memoir *Panegyric*, and the passionate and so nearly comprehensive (film) book *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni* (*We Go Round and Round in the Night and Are Consumed by Fire*).

As Len Bracken concludes, even if Debord's theses become dated it will be his courage that will continue to serve as inspiring method. *In Girum...* ends with a personal valediction that I will never forget: "As these last reflections on violence still show, for me there will be no going back and no reconciliation. There will be no good conduct."

Drawing Life

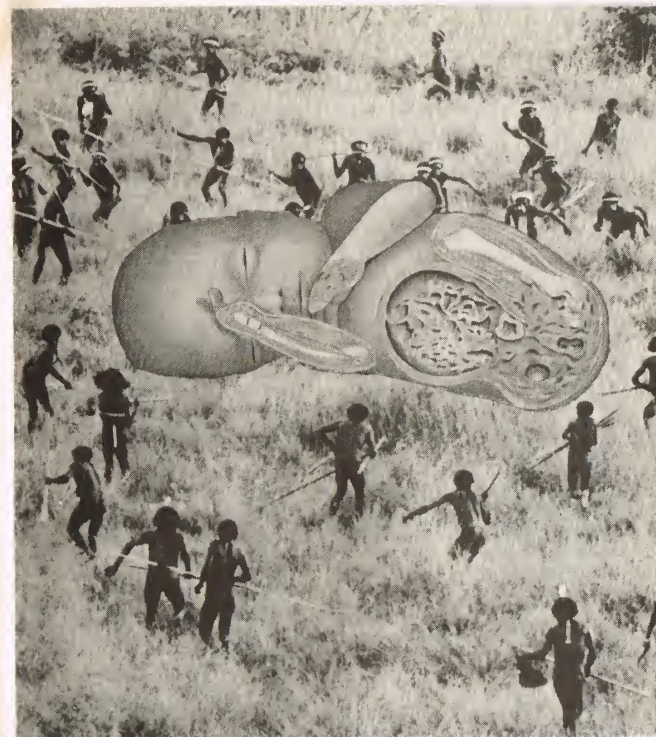
Reviewed by John Zerzan

Drawing Life: Surviving the Unabomber by David Gelernter (The Free Press, New York, NY, 1997) 159pp. \$21.00 hardcover.

The reigning social order definitively needs its unsubtle, single-minded champions of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, cloning, and the like, if it hopes to eliminate the undomesticated and ensure a totally synthetic and estranged world. But it requires the services of its humanist apologists even more, in the struggle for the acceptance of the unthinkable. It needs the voices of those who can reassure by "looking at all sides" of the question, who calmly counsel us to remember that technology "isn't everything"—as they strive to disarm growing doubt as to its totalizing menace.

David Gelernter is precisely one of these latter smoothies, who sells the computerization of life, while claiming to be a reluctant techie and mainly an aesthetically-oriented kind of guy. He criticizes the weaker and peripheral anti-tech arguments, strenuously avoiding the basic ones, and thus helps to sell the project as a whole. As a computer science professor at Yale, he has been amply rewarded for his services—and also punished: on June 24, 1993, Gelernter suffered permanent disfigurement of his right hand and possibly permanent damage to his right eye when he opened a package from the Unabomber.

This explosion, perhaps not surprisingly, has altered his outlook to some degree, and inspired a nasty little book. *Drawing Life* departs from the tone of cultured "Renaissance Man" who sagely accepts the inevitable techno-future while leisurely imparting the comfortable mes-



Johann Humyn Being

sage that we'll be able somehow to ensure that this future turns out well. Rather, this latest book, nicely timed for the advent of the Theodore Kaczynski trial, is a very embittered screed of the kind one might get from a typical Rush Limbaugh fan.

Drawing Life draws a bead on the usual right-wing targets: intellectuals, feminists, etc. The '60s, obviously amounted to a Very Bad Thing, full of tolerance and freedoms. Vaguely aware of the growing crisis of society, Gelernter sets up a good vs. evil framework that castigates the afflicted for their whining and lack of ethical fortitude. He offers his sour moralisms in lieu of analysis, never bringing the basic logic of this death's-head system into the equation. Of course he never faces up to the Unabomber's "Industrial System and Its Future," because it would undo his entire little rant. Once more of a confident liberal, now Gelernter rails shrilly in a threadbare game of blaming the victims. A pity he couldn't have found a way to also condemn species for disappearing, or old-growth trees for being cut down.

article discussed pornography, which she recommended. Intrigued by her confessional yet thought-provoking piece, I became for the first time an occasional patron of the X-rated section of the local video store. Shyly, I asked certain close friends if they had read the article, and what their reaction was. I learned with interest that Tisdale was writing a book on the philosophy of sex.

Talk Dirty to Me received more media attention than any of Sallie Tisdale's earlier books. (She had previously written about the geography and culture of the Pacific Northwest, life in a nursing home, and salt.) As soon as I found out the title, I requested that the public library buy the book, and placed a hold on it. That was in November. Checking the online catalog soon after the book's publication, I found there were nine holds on three copies. My turn came around the first of March.

Meanwhile, I stopped in at our neighborhood bookstore, and judged the price too steep for my budget. Some of that cost must have gone into the book's beautiful design and black dustjacket. I opted for delayed gratification. Only when I finally checked out a library copy did I discover the arresting front cover photograph, an unusually seductive fruit or vegetable held tenderly in someone's fingers. Is it a unripe peach? a weird tomato? a mutant apple? Whatever it is, it looks startlingly like...someone's bare bottom? a hairless vulva? Whatever it looks like, it is definitely...disturbing? exciting? illusory?

And this cover is a perfect introduction to what is perhaps the main theme of *Talk Dirty to Me*. Tisdale reports on some of her own sexual experiences, and explores what sex means to quite an array of other people, in light of her steadfast belief in the idiosyncratic uniqueness of each individual's sexual response. In the name of freedom, she defends the right of any person to pursue his or her path to sexual fulfillment. In answer to "conservative feminists" who argue that pornography is inherently sexist and violent towards women, Tisdale posits her own assumption about the limits to morally acceptable sexual activity: no harm to others, no harm to oneself, physically or emotionally.

Within these limits, which make sense to me, there is room for both freedom and tolerance. "The main reason I resist censoring any form of speech or expression is a selfish one," Tisdale writes. "I know that sooner or later something I write or something I want to read or see or talk about is going to be forbidden." In *Talk Dirty to Me*, Tisdale names the unnameable, going behind the scenes of the ongoing sex movies—explicit or covert—that bombard us every day on television, on the street, in the workplace, in recreational settings—and yes, at home. Whatever Catherine MacKinnon or Andrea Dworkin might say about it, this is a liberating book. It's also a good read. Ask your library to buy a copy.

Talk Dirty to Me

Reviewed by Maria Mitchell

Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex by Sallie Tisdale (Doubleday, New York, NY, 1994) 338pp. \$22.95 hardcover.

About three years ago, I came across an article in *Harper's* by Sallie Tisdale. It was only a couple of pages long, but it sparked a significant change in my behavior. Tisdale's

Kinks in space

Review by Dave Mandl

X-Ray by Ray Davies (The Overlook Press, Woodstock, NY, 1996) 420pp. \$15.95 paper.

Sure, Ray Davies seems bitter, but if you'd had to put up with the kind of abuse that Ray and his band have for the last 30 years, you wouldn't be all smiles either. Squirming through the occasional melodramatic excesses of *X-Ray*, "The Unauthorized Autobiography," is a small price to pay to finally hear the Kinks' story from Davies's own mouth.

X-Ray is a memoir wrapped in a science fiction story not unlike the hokey rock operas Davies was writing in the mid-seventies. In it, The Corporation, which controls the world and has effaced all traces of individuality and personal freedom, sends a cub writer to get the life story of Davies, now a sad and hermetic old man. Their real intention, of course, is to destroy the former Kinks frontman, who, powerless and forgotten as he is, still possesses knowledge, memories, and dreams whose very existence pose a threat to the sterile New Order. As the young writer hears Ray's story, he comes to the unavoidable conclusion that The Corporation is evil, and in the end resolves to work against it.

This rather thin meta-story doesn't intrude much on Ray's reminiscences (which don't go very far beyond the late sixties, to the undoubtedly relief of Kinks fans everywhere), and ends up being a clever vehicle for Davies to speak in both the first and third person, making observations about his own personality that would be impossible in a straight autobiography. Still, the main thrill is having the normally reticent Davies spill the details on Kinks mysteries that have been the subject of speculation for years: his childhood, his nervous breakdown(s), the band's notorious management problems, and most of all, their years-long ban from America.

An outsider even when the Kinks were the toast of the pop scene, Davies never cared much for the modern world, and held political views that were, unfashionably, neither left nor right. His childhood experiences with doctors, shrinks, and unsympathetic teachers led him to distrust authority early on. The terrifying primal experience of finding out that his father had lost his job, and then spying him at the labor exchange collecting his unemployment check, left a lasting impression on him; so did an early stint in the printing shop of a magazine, where his crotchety unionist co-workers spent their days bitching about the management and lecturing him for working during his tea breaks. (He eventually began pretending not to work so they wouldn't give him a hard time.) In time he learned, to his dismay, that even pop stardom and a string of number-one hits wouldn't free him from the con-men and gangsters who really run the world. He grew to detest not only the nameless aristocrats in the City who wrecked people's lives by moving slips of paper around,

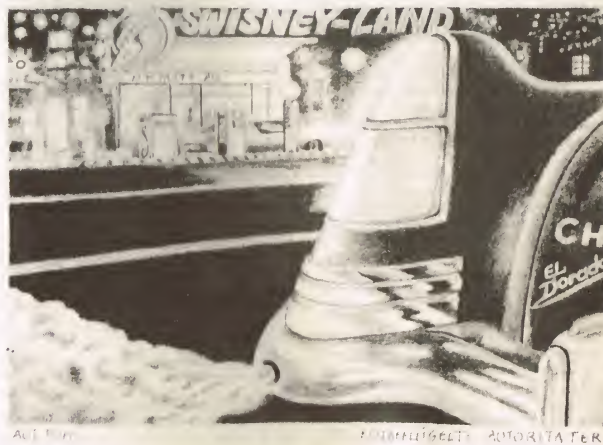
but also the sham socialism of England's Labor government—and the modern Welfare State in general, with its hatred of individuality, its bureaucracy, and its "people in grey."

After a few years producing hugely popular anthems like "You Really Got Me," "All Day and All of the Night," and "Where Have All the Good Times Gone," reinventing rock and roll along the way (thanks in large part to brother Dave's proto-punk guitar style), Davies began aiming his chainsaw wit at various deserving social targets, establishing himself as a kind of modern-day Oscar Wilde. He skewered foppish Carnaby Street fashion victims ("Dedicated Follower of Fashion") and upper-class twits ("A Well-Respected Man," "Mr. Pleasant," "House in the Country") to the delight of everyone, including—in the spirit of the free and jocular sixties—foppish Carnaby Street fashion victims and upper-class twits. He mocked session musicians (and by implication, modern capitalism, with its emphasis on efficiency and rationalism) in "Session Man," and ridiculed America's conversion of paradise into a commercial theme park in "Holiday in Walkiki." The Kinks were probably the first pop group to record a song with openly gay overtones ("See My Friends"), and the first to use Indian drones on a rock record (ditto).

But deep down, Ray was hopelessly out of step with the sixties youth culture. In the pre-Sgt. Pepper days of September 1966, the Kinks released (as a single, no less) the bleak "Dead End Street," an almost morbid piece of social realism about cracked ceilings, rent collectors, and the meager prospects that the

future held for most British citizens—Peace, Love, and Mary Quant notwithstanding. While Swinging London was in full bloom, Davies committed the hipness-crime of getting married, moving into a modest bedsit a short walk from where he grew up, and voluntarily spending time wheeling a baby carriage and doing household chores. On the *Village Green Preservation Society* LP, he pulled out all the stops, devoting the whole record to attacks on the modern world and reminiscences of the pre-industrial age ("We are the Office Block Persecution Affinity. God save little shops, china cups, and virginity..."). In the song "People Take Pictures of Each Other," he even ridiculed photography: "People take pictures of the summer, just in case someone thought they had missed it, and to prove that it really existed. Fathers take pictures of the mothers, and the sisters take pictures of brothers, just to show that they love one another. You can't picture love that you took from me, when we were young and the world was free..." This was obviously light-years beyond the quaint nostalgia of "Penny Lane."

Unfortunately, not very many people got to hear it. Thanks to a performing ban on the Kinks in the United States, courtesy of the American Federation of Musicians, the band was rendered effectively invisible in this country throughout their most creative period. The reasons for the ban have always been cloudy at best, and Davies himself has avoided talking about it, but in *X-Ray*, he grudgingly broaches the subject, revealing that...he never quite knew the reason himself. Among the many enemies



the Kinks made on their early U.S. tours, the most likely candidate seems to be a patriotic jerk who worked for a TV show that the Kinks appeared on. He accused the band of being late, and after several "Commie wimp" and "limey bastard" jibes that made it clear he was holding the Kinks personally responsible for the entire British Invasion, he threatened to show "just how powerful America is" by filing a report on the band and "making sure they never worked in the USA again."

While losing a fortune by having America closed off to the band, Ray also had to contend with years of litigation, trying to extricate the group from the usurious recording and publishing contracts they had signed when they were still teenagers. These nightmares, combined with the hell of touring, the band's off-and-on battles with the press (who preferred more media-friendly groups like the Beatles), and the tremendous pressure exerted on Davies to keep producing hit records, caused him to have at least one full-fledged nervous breakdown. He seemed constantly on the brink of others—as, for example, when his wife Rasa (who can be heard singing on most of the Kinks' early records) left him—but ultimately survived even his creative nadir in the seventies, when, by his own admission, he "shouldn't have been allowed to make records."

The years have been extremely kind to Ray Davies' songs and the Kinks' records, and if Davies hasn't quite gotten over the mistreatment he has had to endure from managers, lawyers, TV producers, redneck sheriffs, and the press over the years, there aren't too many people more deserving of the right to whine a little. *X-Ray* is one of the most sincere and compelling rock and roll memoirs I've read (and I haven't even mentioned any of the sex stories). While it may be hard to appreciate for those who aren't familiar with Davies' work, this can be easily rectified with a couple of weekends listening to *Face to Face*, *Something Else*, *Village Green Preservation Society*, *The Kinks Kronicles*, and *Muswell Hillbillies*. Which you should be doing anyway.

Lords of Poverty

Reviewed by Joseph Heathcott

Lords of Poverty: The Free-wheeling Lifestyles, Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the Multibillion Dollar Aid Business by Graham Hancock (Mandarin Paperbacks, London, England, 1994 [2nd Printing]) 234pp. paper.

In the mid-1980s, senior staff at the World Bank, employing various illegal means, managed to land a copy of a damning manuscript. Written by Graham Hancock, the former East African correspondent for *The Economist*, a co-editor of *New Internationalist* magazine, and editor of *Africa Guide*, the manuscript was a work in progress, a culmination of nearly fifteen years experience with the "Aid-Industrial Complex." From that point until the Ms. was pub-

lished as *Lords of Poverty*, the World Bank mandarins tried every variety of dirty pool to stall Hancock's access to Bank information, documents and personnel. Despite their efforts, *Lords of Poverty* was put to the presses in 1989 by MacMillan, and has enjoyed no less than nine subsequent print runs with Mandarin Paperbacks.

There is no mystery about the widespread appeal of Hancock's exposé: there is something in it for everyone. For the neo- and paleoconservative, there is solace in Hancock's compelling figures of billions of taxpayer dollars wasted through Liberal Foreign Aid on flawed and ill-conceived projects. For progressives and leftists Hancock raises the crucial questions of democratic control, just distribution of resources, and accountability—or lack thereof in the case of such institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the various UN agencies. And for the libertarian and anarchist, Hancock extols the intelligence, capabilities, and creativity of ordinary people in the Third World countries where aid monies, entrenched regimes, and global capitalist muscle squelch self-help options for the poor.

This last component of Hancock's analysis is of particular importance given his elaboration of the liberal humanitarian ethic, which he describes as "inherently ethnocentric, paternalistic, and patronizing," which depends on notions of Northern technical and cultural superiority, and which conditions aid technocrats to despise indigenous knowledges. This ethic among Bank and UN elites produces the most potent ideological blocks to meaningful economic transformation through people-centered and controlled development.

Lords of Poverty's most practical utility is its concise overview of the aid industry, broken down into major bilateral and multilateral players, their histories, internecine antagonisms and turf wars. Hancock stands conventional wisdom on its head by indicting this complex of institutions with a long list of disasters, as well as a structural and ideological commitment to Northern trade domination—as opposed to "aid." From his chapter on so-called development industry "experts," appropriately titled "The Midas Touch," Hancock provides an eloquent summary.

Roads that end in rivers and then continue blithely onward on the other side, silos without power supplies, highly sophisticated equipment that no one can use installed in remote places, aquaculture projects producing fish at \$4,000 per kilo for consumption by African peasants who do not even earn \$400 a year, dams that dispossess thousands and spread fatal water-borne diseases, resettlement schemes that make the migrants poorer than they were before they left home, that destroy the environment and that obliterate tribal peoples—such blunders are not quaint exceptions to some benign and general rule of development. On the contrary, they are the rule.

The Aid-Industrial Complex, Hancock explains, is close cousin to the military and prison industries. It is largely state-subsidized growth

industry in which taxpayers are compelled to provide much or all of the working capital for the benefit of industry personnel—in this case the Byzantine bureaucracies of the Bank, the Fund and the UN. In fact, as Hancock's research shows, 70 cents of every US dollar earmarked for Foreign Aid never actually leaves the US, and in the UK the figure is upwards of 80 to 90 percent. Most of the money is used for salaries, perks and material purchase within the metropole for projects overseas. Very little of the capital is actually spent or invested in the communities where the projects are being assembled, and local people are never consulted for their experience, understanding, technical knowledge and approval.

The benefits for the poor in so-called developing countries are marginal and questionable at best, and at worst saddle them with enormous, inappropriate, capital-draining and environment-destroying hydropower, aquaculture and agribusiness projects. Thus, "aid" ends up as one more form of corporate welfare: large chunks of taxpayer-provided capital funneled through opaque bureaucracies into purchase orders earmarked for transnational corporations. Hancock points to the irony of this statist protection racket, glibly and daily subverting the "principles of free trade" which are the rhetorical pillar of the North's economic agenda.

Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns

Review by Joseph Heathcott

Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns: Better Living With Less Traffic by David Engwicht (New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1995.) 190pp. paper.

Like many New Society books I have read in the past few years, this recent publication suffers from a combination of overwrought, vague and metaphorical writing on the one hand, and an editorial process that lacks the necessary spine to hone the author's ramblings into coherent prose. This is not to say the works lack merit, but that writers for New Society would be well served with a closer, more severe editorial approach. While authors can be forgiven their occasional lapses, or even their outright factual distortions, that these permeate a finished publication is the fault solely of the consultant editors.

With this caveat in mind, *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns* should be read with a shaker of salt to sprinkle over particular sections which wax "historical" and "scientific." The overindulgent use of neologisms such as "Eco-city," "Eco-relational thinking," and "Eco-rights," as well as the proclivity toward absurd historical generalizations should earn the errant editorial staff a spanking. At the same time, Engwicht is capable of provocative insights and pragmatic flashes which can be of use to grass roots activists.

The majority of historical offenses derive from

Engwicht's romantic notion of both pre-industrial cities and current (read "timeless") European metropolises. Before the Industrial Revolution, for example, "people [what people?] viewed their cities holistically, organically, as an eco-system." Then, somehow, people became slaves to a mechanistic, materialist (sic) worldview that led cities to be transformed into "machines." Moreover, before "Newton ushered in the Scientific Age" (he did not—no one person ever ushers in an entire age), people "thought ecologically," but today the only repositories of this kind of thinking are "indigenous cultures" and "many women." Not content to contain his generalizations there, Engwicht contrasts the "pro-urban European psyche" with the "Anglo-Saxon loathing of the city," a pathos for which he blames the L.A. riots. As an off-and-on editor myself, I would never have allowed such gratuitously blanket statements to be printed on my press.

However the editors cannot be blamed for Engwicht's naive view of cities as "places of mutual exchange," as "Eco-systems" which carefully balance out the multitude of experiences in daily life. Indeed, no one but Engwicht—and a particular philosophical bent—can be held responsible for this functionalist and reductive teleology of the city. Cities do have those qualities, of course, but they are also arenas in which people contest, conflict, struggle, and hustle, where many modes of experience overlap: oppression, exploitation, ecstasy, delirium, tedium, and so on. Engwicht's dedication to a moral holism overlooks the many ways in which the experience of the city is fragmented by divisions that probably don't impinge upon, hinder, or effect the author (race, class, gender, to name a few).

To the extent that these fragmentations exist, Engwicht's holistic city can absorb them as pluralities which contribute to the richness of the whole. This attitude makes Engwicht less interested in leveling class divisions than in creating mixed-income neighborhoods so that both poor people and rich people can be edified by the encounter. A way to stave off class war perhaps? "Each new community," he opines, "should have all types of housing: walk-up flats, cheap speculative housing, special purpose housing for the aged, housing for University students, and prestige housing." Excuse me, but speculative housing? Prestige housing? Aren't speculation and class differences, manifest in the uses of urban land, two of the chief problems facing cities today?

Engwicht does at least provide a useful discussion of the political and economic contexts of auto-dominated cities. Citing the preeminence of a technocratic elite formulating compartmentalized plans for urban land use, Engwicht describes how this disempowers people, and alienates them from a landscape that should be theirs to shape and control. Moreover, he chastises political elites for divorcing decisions about the uses and allocations of urban space from ethical and moral implications. In the end, Engwicht is not against experts per se, but rather against the concentration of power and decision-making in the hands

of experts. Planners and engineers should work on a consultative basis with and for neighborhoods and communities, serving democratic rather than autocratic ends.

Furthermore, Engwicht's discussion of the effects of auto-dominated city planning is nuanced and well-crafted. Rationalized, technocratic planning for an automobile infrastructure, he argues, creates isolated and atomized experiences, destroys neighborhoods, reduces people's exchange opportunities, erodes creative spontaneity and chaos, and tramples over social diversity and human rights.

The last chapter of *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns* outlines particular strategies for "rebuilding" cities. After a long-winded, half-baked, and factually distorted discussion of fractals, chaos models, and other "natural" forms to be emulated in planning, Engwicht finally asserts that the solution lies not in laws but in general shifts in attitudes. Planning decisions, he explains, ought to be made which encourage creative relationships, enhance mutual exchange, and contribute to the quality of life of all people. His preferred strategies, however, constantly refer back to punitive and legislative measures, invoking such authoritarian mechanisms as surveillance cameras, mandatory installation of speed calm-

ing devices in offenders' vehicles, stiff fines and penalties, and coercive surcharges. His point is well taken that the hidden costs of an auto-dominated infrastructure ought to be borne by drivers themselves, but his only recourse for enforcement is the bureaucratic state.

Engwicht's primary shortcoming is a failure to envision new modes of decision-making, new political arrangements that might wrest control of planning from elites. With a battery of good ideas, a workable (if often naive) point of departure for criticism of auto-dominated cities, and a strong moral sense of what needs to be done, Engwicht would have done well to reconsider the channels by which his ideas should be implemented. While his reticence on this front might stem from a desire to forward immediate pragmatic solutions to auto-dominance, he has put the cart before the horse. First we should turn our energies toward how we might change the very basis of decision-making in our society—whether through pragmatic or insurrectionary approaches. In the end, because of his limited analysis of power, Engwicht fails to recognize the extent to which the domination of the urban landscape by automobiles is coterminous with the current political order. One can not be changed without the other.

Social Anarchism revisited

Review by Laure Akai

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm by Murray Bookchin (AK Press, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh, EH1 9PE, Scotland; or POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682, USA, 1995) 87pp. \$5.95/\$7.95 paper.

As we all know, anarchists are a rather insignificant force in American life, although we can see how many anarchistic ideas have influenced the American mainstream through different processes and see society's constant co-optation of radical ideas. We can truly ask ourselves for the hundredth or thousandth time, Why? and we may come up with a mind-boggling multiplicity of interrelated factors. If we are to believe Bookchin, "it is due in no small measure to the changes that have occurred among many anarchists over the past two decades. Like it or not, thousands of self-styled anarchists have slowly surrendered the social core of anarchist ideas to the all pervasive yuppie and New Age personalism that marks this decadent, bourgeoisified era." Talk about ahistoricism! It's as if the thriving anarchist movement got wrecked because of a few books and a few folks who don't like organization (who, despite Bookchin's paranoia, are probably not the majority of anarchists in America, and most of whom shouldn't pose any impediment to Bookchin's "social anarchists," since they move in different circles and often don't even pretend to be anarchists). The facts attest to something very different: that the interest in anarchism has been steadily in decline in America since the first decades of this century (with a few moments of historically

related resuscitation) and that the social anarchists that Bookchin so values (the communists and collectivists who put society over the individual and sought change through organization and programs) themselves failed to bring anarchism to the public, themselves failed to overcome various factors against them and make anarchism immediately desirable for a large number of people.

Bookchin, being not a total idiot, if not totally disingenuous, understands that traditional notions of community, interpersonal relations, and self-organization are rapidly being eroded (if not obliterated) in most urban parts of the states and europe, yet instead of paying attention to what is killing anarchism as a potential revolutionary force (which in my opinion is a complicated combination of factors such as urbanization, a highly specialized division of labor, the mass consolidation of capitalism and political power, technologically aided instruments of social control, the specters of race and nations, the devastating effects of poverty in light of Protestant ideology, the isolating character of the televised leisure society, etc., ad nauseam, plus some problems stemming from anarchist tactics), Bookchin moralistically and incorrectly puts the blame on people who are no more passive than the masses themselves, but are not the worst of what Bookchin would label lifestyle anarchists.

For those of you who can't figure it out already, "lifestyle anarchists" are "primitivistic, prerational, anti-technological, petty-bourgeois, trendy, narcissistic, infantile, prelapsarian, aesthetic, elitist, reactionary." They are, accord-

ing to Bookchin logic, not at all interested in transforming a society based on a libertarian communist model, which Bookchin labels one of the four "basic tenets" of "traditional anarchism." (For this heresy Bookchin blasts Stirner as well.) It is important to point out that there are a great deal of people who are critical of Bookchin's views on anarchism (especially libertarian municipalism), who are not "primitivists," who are not "mystics," who are not "trendy." There are mystical communists, there are people who combine the ideas of Stirner with Kropotkin, or who come up with their own philosophies of anarchism, who do not deny the fact that they are products of society, who are not the "petty-bourgeois egotists" that the Soviets warned us about, who are interested in the struggle against capitalism in social relations between people, yet the fact that the great majority of anarchists develop their own unique synthesis of different ideas, based on empirical experience as well as what they've read, and cannot be neatly categorized into one of the two camps, is irrelevant for Bookchin's purposes. Like a true ideologue, things must be presented in absolutes to make a point. The fact that many anarchists, unlike Bookchin, are not interested in developing a dogmatic ideology or a political program can be partly attested to by the fact of the existence of Bookchin's book itself, published by AK Press. In an ironic ending, the back of the book lists present AK publications, with such diverse thinkers as Bookchin, Chomsky (whom Bookchin hates), the platformist Makino, some "lifestyle" anarchists, Stewart Home (who hates Bakuninists), Crass, Guerin.... What does that mean, when a publishing group puts out books that are antithetical in ideas? It could mean that AK is a crass business venture, or that they don't read the books they publish, or that they don't understand the differences of opinions in their books, or that they just don't care because their own views are fluid and complex and they value some points of different writers, but not all points of any one. I don't know them and I can't say, but I wouldn't be surprised if the last possibility were the most accurate. Sometimes this means, as Bookchin alleges, that there is some contradiction and confusion in anarchist thought. True—many wildly contradict themselves, but this also attests to the fact that anarchism and rebellion have a rich and diverse history, that people are practicing the art of creative thought and don't swallow ideology like party hacks and rent-a-personality clones. It's stupid to think that just because somebody writes something that anarchists or radicals adopt those texts as canons and that people who are interested in transforming society become dissuaded by Zerzan, Bey, or L. Susan Brown. It is true that there are some brainless sheep out there that eat up and then spit out what they relate to aesthetically—but why should one be concerned with these people? It is significant that Bookchin casts most of his venom at the Bey, whom many half-witted schizophrenics appreciate for his attempts to create new identity labels; Hakim represents an alternative guru for the spiritually homeless and

has invaded Bookchin's turf for the conversion of the lambs. (In a way, Bookchin and Bey have some things in common: both are bourgeois old men hungry for affection who want to leave their mark on radical history before they croak. I think I'll live to see the day that both are devoid of their charm.) Despite the fact that the radical chic *du jour* is not what Bookchin claims can change society, this does not explain why all the anarchists who believe in organization, programs, communalism, and so on do not have a great impact on society and this despite the fact that they are actually, despite what Bookchin would have us believe, more numerous than the "lifestyle anarchists." (Although there are no statistics on this, I think it's true, but anybody stuck in a bohemian ghetto might not even know it—the same for anyone who sits home in Vermont and entertains scared white liberals.)

There have always been some radical heretics around the anarchist movement, but that never really stopped people from doing what they wanted, having organizational ideas. Did Stirner deter Bakunin from his organizational work? Was it the Russian masons and mystics around the old movement that deterred the other anarchists from making a social revolution? (Actually, after all the anarcho-communists were gone, they kept up the Kropotkin museum.) Did the kooky aesthetic anarchists in turn-of-the-century New York steer people away from their social ideals? True, nowadays, thanks to desktop and electronic publishing, more people will read the words of the marginals. And these words, apparently, have found an audience. I don't know how large that audience is. I don't know if there will be any great or lasting audience for anti-rationalistic ecstasies. Perhaps what Bookchin fears will come true—that "the revolutionary and social goals of anarchism are suffering far-reaching erosion to a point where the word anarchy will become part of the chic bourgeois vocabulary of the coming century—naughty, rebellious, insouciant, but deliciously safe." Of course society will try to destroy and co-opt everything in opposition to it.

Bookchin seems to think that many "lifestyle anarchists" would not offer opposition to capitalism, which is why the system can co-opt them. He goes on to label all lifestyle anarchists as bourgeois (as if Bakunin, Kropotkin, and he himself weren't) and suggest it is a safe guise for the bourgeois to play radical. There is some truth in this with some people. Still, I hardly think the corporate boardrooms are cowering in fear of Bookchin. This is the biggest hoot for anybody who has met any Bookchinists. Maybe I'm missing something, but there must be a reason that loads of people aren't rushing to Vermont to organize the social revolution with St. Murray. St. Murray leads us into making the following assumptions: that the times are egotistical, people are too stupid to see that they are social beings, and that those nasty lifestyle anarchists are steering the flock in the wrong direction. The fact is that many anarchists who are interested in social revolution and are not as sheepish as Bookchin imagines, don't like

Bookchin's visions of libertarian municipalism because it doesn't address the fact that society can be the agent of social repression of the will, and they do not believe in democracy as a goal.

We've all seen local citizen's groups acting out the most authoritarian forms of repression and although Bookchin fears that small minorities can tyrannize the majority by manipulating consensus (which sometimes does occur) majorities will eventually use their strength to squash minorities. Currently, many irrational, idiotic, brainwashed majorities are in fact oppressing minorities (in thought, lifestyle, nationality, gender, etc.) to which almost all anarchists (by the very fact of their ideas) belong. What Bookchin ignores is that few anarchists feel comfortable in society and that few would fit in like Bookchin (and that few would wear a tie on the cover of their books—except a few highly socialized easterners that I know, who, among other things get married, have kids, and in general live pretty much like all the other sheep around us). Real alienation from a seemingly ever more conservative society all contribute to people holding out more hope for union with like-minded individuals not with "society."

(One incident that testifies to the good will of the social revolutionary majorities is when one guy was visiting the Bookchinite holy grounds [note: the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont] and was accused, in truly hysterical, brainwashed, irrational fashion, of being a child molester for having different ideas than the rest of the wacky, hung-up society. Although he tried to explain his position, he was run out of town, showing just how the bogeymen in people's heads lead people to stupid, prejudiced action and infringe on the freedom of minorities.)

Bookchin's ideas are also not so attractive for people who are suspicious that such organizations as workers' committees, citizens' committees, and so on will become hierarchic organizations that mimic the state. But having such suspicions is not the same, as Bookchin seems to believe, as not realizing that one is a product of society or that society as a whole must be changed for people to be free.

Bookchin also seems to thrive in myth more than reality. According to him, anarchists of the past (part of Bookchin's nostalgic Left that Was) viewed anarcho-syndicalism as middle-class exotica and tried to form "energetic revolutionary forms of organization." Thus, in the '30s in Spain, anarchists were able to organize programs that even lifestyle anarchists like Hakim Bey could admire. However, much testifies to the fact that leftist ideas on the whole are in decline. Have the various types of socialists and communists out there also eschewed "any serious commitment to an organizational, programmatically coherent social confrontation with the existing order"? The answer is that they too suffer from the public feeling of powerlessness, which of course Bookchin admits is an important reason why discontent is not channeled. (As MB puts it, "even respectable forms of socialism are in pell-mell retreat

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Guy Debord, 1968

The Situationist Years

Len Bracken

"Guy Debord 1968: The Situationist Years" is the twenty-third chapter of Len Bracken's important new biography, *Guy Debord—Revolutionary*, just published by Feral House.

Far more important than the reputation he earned for his provocations in the radical/avant-garde art milieu or as an innovative filmmaker, Debord will remain best known as the primary architect, theorist and strategist of the Situationist International from its birth in 1957 through its demise in 1972. And, of course, the Situationists are best known for the inciting role they played in the May-June 1968 general strike (and near revolution) in France. What follows is an account of the S.I.'s, and especially Debord's, involvement in the unfolding events of this extraordinary "revolutionary festival that contained within it, a generalized critique of all alienations."

Len Bracken has written a surprisingly accessible intellectual biography, which provides the necessary historical and philosophical background to allow readers to make sense of his life and times. The biography successfully situates Debord's thought and activities within the context of world history and the trajectory of the modern revolutionary movement. As such it is an excellent place to begin an acquaintance with one of the pre-eminent post-World War II revolutionary groups. Other equally important texts for understanding the situationists include: Guy Debord's masterwork *Society of the Spectacle*, fellow situationist Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (serialized in this magazine), and Ken Knabb's *Situationist International Anthology* (all available from C.A.L. Press, see page 82 of this magazine).

Len Bracken's *Guy Debord—Revolutionary* is available directly from the publisher for \$14.95 + \$2.00 postage and handling: Feral House, 2532 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 359, Venice, CA 90291; email: cult@feralhouse.com. It can also be ordered with credit card from Atomic Books at 1-800-778-6246.

It was in December, 1967 that Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* was published by Gallimard. This *Treatise on How to Live*, as a literal translation of the French title reads, has done as much to spread sabotage and subversion as any book I know. With his own references to writing the book at cafes and the legend about his dismissal from his high school

teaching post for preaching free love, we can almost catch a fleeting image of a free-wheeling young Raoul drifting through the streets of Paris and Brussels. He sneers back at those who would make him feel like an object, all the while feeling the humiliation worthy of a Rousseau. Violently atheist, inspiring in his denunciation of the "disgrace of work" and the "dictatorship of consumption," Vaneigem is widely read, albeit in flawed translations—many, if not most of the people who have become interested in the S.I. came to it via *The Revolution of Everyday Life*.

For that reason, and because this is a book on Debord, I'll forego a detailed exposition of this influential tome and encourage readers to check it out for themselves. Rather than a series of concise, numbered theses as with Debord, Vaneigem divides his book in half and fills the expansive pages with literary references and cynical similes such as "like arsenic in jelly." The first part is his lyrical critique of "The Perspective of Power," informed by his study of Roman philology, Hegel and Marx. As with his "Basic Banalities," this is a very Kojevian reading of Hegel and Marx, that brings the master-slave dichotomy to the modern world. In fact, the chapter on "Exchange and Gift," with its references to potlatch and sacrifice is more reminiscent of that dissident student of Kojève, Georges Bataille, than any other S.I. text. Vaneigem's profound critique of roles, the repetition of stereotypes or any other spectacular category provides still more evidence that Greil Marcus' equation of the S.I. project with Jung's activation of archetypes is completely erroneous. Part of Vaneigem's appeal is that he addresses the idea of freedom and sovereignty from an individual perspective rooted in everyday life in his "Reversal of Perspective."

Those who speak of revolution and class struggle with explicit references to everyday life, without understanding the subversiveness of love and what's positive in the refusal of constraints, they have a cadaver in their mouths.

These lines and many others from *R.E.L.* (as Vaneigem's book is referred to in England) would find their way onto the walls of the Latin Quarter during the hot days of May '68, even if Vaneigem wasn't there—actually he was there, but he went on "vacation" for a week at the height of the events, which resulted in some acrimony between him and other members of the S.I. Looking back on the May Revolution, Andre Stephane went so far as to say that "Vaneigem's very



Situationist graffiti—"Take your desires for reality." (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

style is that of the slogans of May. He seems, moreover, to have been at the origin of many of the most successful and poetic phrases.... The author of the *Treatise on Living* gives us a key for understanding the role and place of the *paranoic mechanisms of our civilization*."

Aside from the release of Debord and Vaneigem's books, 1967 was a year of premonition—Soviet dissidents protested in Moscow, anti-military German students protested across the republic, riots in Berlin, Tunis.... "Burn this town down" was shouted at the radical riots that rocked Newark, Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, Washington, DC and many other cities during the summer of 1967. The C.I.A. set up the illegal Operation Chaos to look into war protesters as Mao's efforts to bring Chinese peasants into the Cultural Revolution created a virtual civil war. In the Fall, agitation erupted at the University of Algeria and a deadly riot occurred in Tokyo. French workers at Saint-Azire, the largest shipyard of the country, went on strike. Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia in October and a week of mourning was held in his honor in Paris in December. As we will see in greater detail below, the student agitation and strike at University of Nanterre in March and November (respectively) were premonitions of what would come the following year.

During the months of November and December 1967, Debord and Vaneigem were picked up by the cops and hauled in for questioning several times. The charge? Debord was the editor who published (in *Internationale Situationiste* #11) Vaneigem's stolen comic strip images adorned with revolutionary phrases; the stolen strip was reproduced in Spain, Denmark and Holland. It's not clear why they were let go, but these sorts of comics would reappear in the Nanterre insurrection and, with a workers' council slant, in the revolution of May '68.

To digress for a moment, according to Douglas Pouch's *The French Secret Services*, the Interior Ministry under de Gaulle and Pompidou wasn't spying too closely on the extreme left—there was no information on Cohn-Bendit, for example, when the events erupted in 1968. Given his years of radical activity, one would think that Debord certainly had a file at the Renseignements Generaux de la Prefecture de Paris. According to the head of the French equivalent of the FBI, the DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire), the Renseignements Generaux tried to blame May '68 on the C.I.A. and Mossad in order to get increased funds for counterintelligence. This charge was easily disproved, and Raymond Marcellin, the Interior Minister at the time, would later (*La Guerre politique*, 1985) blame May '68 on Maoists, other revolutionary groups and "Jews and Germans." After May '68, the Renseignements Generaux created a special "central operational brigade" to destroy left-wing groups through tested methods—burglary, agent provocateurs, phone taps, mail searches, etc. In "*This*

bad reputation..." Debord asserts that "even in the pure S.I. of 1967 there were two provocateurs-infiltrators, perhaps three." It's impossible to say if this increased surveillance played a part in the dissolution of the S.I. a few years after May '68, but this pressure certainly didn't encourage a group that specialized in subversive scandals and knew it needed to democratize if it were to continue to exist in a viable way.

The protests and riots that had spanned the globe in 1967 continued in 1968: student protests against the docking of the U.S. aircraft carrier Enterprise at European ports; student agitation in Warsaw, Algiers, Berlin; riots in Rio de Janeiro; the attempt on German radical Rudi Dutschke's life created solidarity marches in Paris, Rome, Vienna and London. But the activity that interests us here begins on January 8 with the famous incident between Cohn-Bendit and Minister Missoffe, in which the minister was publicly criticized by the German student at the inauguration of a swimming pool at Nanterre (a dismal suburb of Paris): "*Your White Book on Young People* doesn't say a word about the problem of sex!" It should be noted that the Enragés (sympathizers with, and future allies of, the Situationists) had prepared the student body for the event by telling everyone that the pool would become an excellent place for orgies. These Enragés of Nanterre, named after proto-anarchists in the French Revolution, were as fond of scandal as the Situationists, and following the swimming pool incident, more and more students began to imitate their radical tactics. Plainclothes cops were photographed by students on campus, and the pictures were posted. When the cops were sent in, they were thus easily recognized and chased away by anarchists and Enragés. In February, the Enragés circulated the lyrics to songs insulting the university administration and numerous professors. On March 22, the Enragés and other students

occupied a campus administration building, giving birth to the March 22nd Movement, which, after many minor scandals in April, resulted in the closure of the university for two days on May 2. This was the act that spread the agitation to the Latin Quarter of Paris. Although the Enragés left the occupation early because of the presence of certain objectionable radicals (leaving their mark on the walls with slogans such as "Never Work," and "Take your desires for reality"), and discontinued their activity on campus, they were treated harshly by the authorities—Patrick Cheval was expelled from the university and Gerard Bigorne was banned from all establishments of higher learning in France. René Riesel and Cohn-Bendit were scheduled to appear before a university commission on May 6.

Before going into the events of May, note that the best eyewitness account is Situationist René Viénet's *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68*. My account draws on this report, as well as the assessments made by Pascal Dumontier in *The Situationists and May 68* and Jean-Francois Martos' *History of the Situationist International*. Numerous other books deal with the subject, but none offer the same focus on the Situationist role. It should also be said at the outset that none of the Situationists, perhaps Debord least of all, sought to gain personal glory in a spectacular way. When the actions of the Situationists are described, we should bear in mind that Debord, Khayati, Viénet and later Vaneigem were the only Situationists in Paris at the time. In other words, Debord certainly had a hand in all Situationist activity during the occupation movement. And lest anyone doubt his influence, note that the first press run of *Society of the Spectacle* had sold out by May.

The first May Day parade in fifteen years took place in Paris on May 1, 1968. Scuffles erupted between the security detail of the major union federation, the C.G.T., and revolutionary students. As mentioned above, the Nanterre campus was closed indefinitely on May 2. Meanwhile, students in Berkeley rebelled against the Vietnam war and copies of Che Guevara's memoir were burned by cops in Barcelona. The March 22nd Movement and the student union called for a meeting in the courtyard of the Sorbonne on Friday, May 3. Viénet was there:

In itself, the meeting of May 3rd was banal: as usual three or four hundred hangers-on responded to the call. The few dozen fascists of the "Occident" group counter-demonstrated at the beginning of the afternoon on the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Several Enragés at the Sorbonne called for the organization of self-defense. Furniture had to be broken up as there were no clubs. Rector Roche and his policemen thought this would be sufficient pretext for an attack. The police and the gendarmerie mobile invaded the courtyard of the Sorbonne without meeting



The Situationists go to the cinema. London, September, 1960.

resistance. The students were encircled. The police then offered them free passage out of the courtyard. The students accepted and the first to leave were in fact allowed to pass. The operation took time and other students began to gather outside in the quarter. The remaining two hundred demonstrators inside the Sorbonne, including all the organizers, were arrested. As the police vans carried them away, the Latin Quarter erupted. One of the two vans never reached its destination. Only three policemen guarded the second van. They were beaten up, and several dozen demonstrators escaped.

A week of street fighting ensued—students were arrested and sentenced to hard time. Police occupied the Latin Quarter. On May 6, the Enragé René Riesel and other students were to appear before a disciplinary commission at the Sorbonne. Demonstrations and riots erupted around the Latin Quarter. Barricades went up and were defended against the police. Suburban hoods (*blousons noirs*) had come to the center of the city to fight side-by-side the students. Cars were burned; stores looted. Slogans were sprayed on the walls. The unions, including the student union, were against the actions of the most revolutionary students and would alternate in their support—for and against (mostly against)—the demonstrations and occupations. According to Viénet, the Situationists were active in creating the barricades and defending them along with young and old workers, students and hoods on rue Gay-Lussac the night of May 10. As the post festum photos show, this had been a real combat zone where revolutionaries responded to the chloride gas grenades and bullets of the police with Molotov cocktails and paving stones.

On May 11, the unions called for a strike on May 13—much to the dismay of Prime Minister Pompidou who had just returned from Afghanistan. He quickly agreed to release

imprisoned students and allowed university buildings to be used to discuss education reform. Pompidou's biggest mistake was to promise to withdraw all police from the Latin Quarter. On Monday May 13, the police withdrew as one million protesters marched through the streets of Paris during the general strike. The students, meeting in the Champ de Mars, decided to occupy the Sorbonne; and at 9:30 PM, it was declared an "Autonomous Popular University, open in permanence, night and day, to all workers."

Lyrical slogans and diverted publicity posters began to appear in the Sorbonne. Viénet reports that although the Enragé René Riesel's remarks about solidarity with looters and demands for absolute power to Workers' Councils weren't applauded as much as those speakers at the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne who simply wanted university reform, Riesel did get elected by the General Assembly to the Occupation Committee—the institution of executive power in the occupied Sorbonne. Riesel would call for and defend "direct democracy at the Sorbonne" in the face of all the problems the Occupation Committee had in asserting its authority. The Occupation Committee was composed of fifteen members, "elected and revokable anytime by the general assembly." This was on May 14, the day when the Enragés and S.I. formed a joint committee and took up stakes in the "Jules Bonnot" room. By all accounts, Debord was very calm, even tranquil, during the occupation. Late in the day, workers at Sud-Aviation factory in Nantes occupied the plant and barricaded themselves in the company president's office. The only thing the Occupation Committee did on May 15, was send a telegram of support to the workers at the Sud-Aviation factory in Nantes. The S.I. reportedly participated in the debates before the General Assembly. According to Debord, only once in his life did he sign a prescriptive tract describing what needed to be done—this was signed on May 14 and distributed the next day.

FROM THE S.I. TO COMRADES WHO HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES IN AGREEMENT WITH OUR THESES.

Comrades,

The student "revolt" of Paris began with a small group of "Enragés" of Nanterre over the last few months; René Riesel; Gérard Bigorne (expelled in April from all French universities for five years), etc. The group took pro-S.I. positions. The rest of the "Movement of March 22nd" (more moderate and confused) found its leader in Danny Cohn-Bendit (anarchist from the group Black and Red) who accepted the role of spectacle celebrity mixed with a certain honest radicalism.

The appearance of these two comrades as well as five other leaders before the University Council unleashed the trouble of May 3. The street movement of May 6 (10 to 15,000 youth) began to be recuperated by the tardy support of the bureaucrats of the U.N.E.F., P.C. etc.

Everything bounced back superbly the night of May 10-11. A section of the 5th district was entirely closed by barricades and was in the hands of a little insurrection for close to eight hours. The forces of order that surrounded it used the last four hours to reduce it. We were 3 to 4,000 rioters strong (about half students, many high schoolers or *blousons noirs*, a few hundred young and old workers).

Violent repression, as we expected. Faced with the loud protest of the entire bureaucratic left and the emotion in working class districts, the government pulled back. Almost all the Paris faculties were occupied and turned into clubs. What dominated was actually direct democracy with a base that wanted to put society

in question, that wanted unification with workers, and which resolutely condemned Stalinist bureaucracy. Three positions appeared in the free general assembly of the occupation of the Sorbonne on May 14, 1968.

1. The first (between a third to half, but who say little) simply want university reform and are at risk of following the recuperation led by the professors on the left.
2. The second—of better stock—wants to pursue the struggle up to the destruction of the Gaullist regime or even of capitalism (all of the nuances of known leftists). Among them, the Federation of Revolutionary Students (Trotskyist Lambertist) which is badly discredited by condemning the barricades.
3. A third position (of a highly vocal minority) was expressed by a declaration of Riesel (which will be communicated to you as soon as possible) wants the abolition of classes, of work, of the spectacle and of survival, and demands the absolute power of Workers' Councils.

The possible developments (in a declining order of probability) are as follows: a) exhaustion of the movement (at least to the degree that it remains with the students before the anti-bureaucratic agitation can win over more workers) b) repression (anticipating the arrest of a large number of rioters) if the movement radicalizes or is maintained for a long time without rocking the working class and dissolving the bureaucracies that control it c) social revolution.

Yesterday we constituted the Committee Enragé-S.I. that began posting the Sorbonne with radical, extremely coherent proclamations. We will continue. Riesel is a member of the first Committee of the Occupation of the Sorbonne (revocable every day by the base).

Do the maximum to make the agitation known, maintained and understood. The principal themes, in the immediate moment in France seem to us to be:

- Occupation of factories

- Constitution of Workers' Councils

- Definitive closure of the university

- A complete critique of all alienations; affirmation of the principal Situationist theses (in particular the diffusion of the S.I.'s "Minimum Definition of Revolutionary Organizations").

Paris, May 15, 1968

Guy-Mustapha-Raoul-René

Vaneigem had arrived to sign the document, only to leave for a week's vacation—The "Communiqué of the S.I. Concerning Vaneigem," written after his resignation described the situation:

The first factory had been occupied the day before, and at this date the most imbecilic member of the most retarded group could not doubt that a very grave social crisis had begun. Nevertheless Vaneigem, much better informed, as soon as he had appended his signature to our circular, left the same afternoon to take his train to rejoin his holiday location on the Mediterranean, booked a long time ago. Several days later, learning abroad, through the mass media, what was proceeding in France (as predicted), he naturally set about returning, crossing with great difficulty the strike-bound country, and rejoining us one week after his ridiculous faux-pas. By then the decisive days, when we were able to do the most for the movement, had passed. Now we're well aware that Vaneigem truly likes revolution and that he in no way lacks courage. Thus one can only understand this as a borderline case of the separation between the rigorous routine of an unshakably orderly daily life and the passion, real but heavily disarmed, for revolution. (reprinted in *The Veritable Split in the International*)

The Enragé-S.I. Committee republished their "Minimum



Building barricades in Paris, May '68. (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

Definition of Revolutionary Organizations" on May 15th as the Occupation Committee found itself in a crisis. Thirteen of the fifteen members deserted the Occupation Committee for other committees, and the General Assembly confirmed eight members of a self-appointed Coordination Committee as an auxiliary to the Occupation Committee. A power struggle between the two committees ensued. In the courtyard of the Sorbonne, Riesel denounced the manipulations of the bureaucrats of the Coordination Committee and told them to face the General Assembly. When the members of the Coordination Committee explained their maneuvers publicly, they were forced by the General Assembly to slink away in shame.

On May 16, the Occupation Committee was reduced to Riesel and one other person. They were bivouacked in the Jules Bonnot room with the S.I., the Enragés and fifteen others. They established a security detail to get the means to disseminate the Occupation Committee's call for the "immediate occupation of all factories in France and the formation of Workers' Councils." Viénet, once again, gives us the eyewitness account:

As has been shown above, the occupation committee had been stripped of all means at its disposal for the execution of the slightest activity. To distribute its appeal, it set out to reappropriate those means. It could count on the support of the Enragés, the Situationists and a dozen other revolutionaries. Using a

megaphone from the windows of the Jules Bonnot Room they asked for, and received, numerous volunteers from the courtyard. The text was recopied and read in all the other amphitheatres and faculties. Since the printing had been purposely slowed down by the Inter-Faculty Liaison Committee, the Occupation Committee had to requisition machines and organize its own distribution service. Because the sound crew refused to read the text at regular intervals, the Occupation Committee had their equipment seized. Out of spite the specialists sabotaged their equipment as they were leaving, and partisans of the committee had to repair it. Telephones were taken over to relay the statement to press agencies, the provinces, and abroad. By 3:30 P.M. it was beginning to be distributed effectively.

One can only begin to imagine what it was like to be standing in the courtyard of the occupied Sorbonne as the entire country began to shut down. These exhilarating events terrified those people strongly opposed to the fanning of flames of discontent. The saboteurs were being sabotaged by reformers who were afraid of the nation-wide wildcat. As factories around the country were occupied, the Occupation Committee announced the occupations over the Sorbonne P.A. system. At 4:30 P.M., the Occupation Committee issued the tract "Vigilance!"

Comrades,

The supremacy of the revolutionary assembly can only mean

Continued on page 56

New York, New York

20 years since the '77 blackout!

John Zerzan

"Amid All the Camaraderie is Much Looting this Time; Seeing the City Disappear." -Wall Street Journal headline, July 15, 1977

The Journal went on to quote a cop on what he saw, as the great Bastille Day break-out unfolded: "People are going wild in the borough of Brooklyn. They are looting stores by the carload." Another cop added later: "Stores were ripped open. Others have been leveled. After they looted, they burned."

At about 9:00 p.m. on July 13 the power went out in New York for 24 hours. During that period the complete impotence of the state in our most "advanced" urban space could hardly have been made more transparent.

As soon as the lights went out, cheers

and shouts and loud music announced the liberation of huge sections of the city. The looting and burning commenced immediately, with whole families joining in the "carnival spirit." In the University Heights section of the Bronx, a Pontiac dealer lost the 50 new cars in his showroom. In many areas, tow trucks and other vehicles were used to tear away the metal gates from stores. Many multi-story furniture businesses were completely emptied by neighborhood residents.

Despite emergency alerts for the state troopers, FBI and National Guard, there was really nothing authority could do, and they knew it. A *New York Times* editorial of July 16 somewhat angrily waved aside the protests of those who wondered why there was almost no intervention on the side of property. "Are you kidding?" the *Times* snorted, pointing out that such provoca-

tion would only have meant that the entire city would still be engulfed in riots, adding that the National Guard is a "bunch of kids" who wouldn't have had a chance.

The plundering was completely multi-racial, with white, black and Hispanic businesses cleaned out and destroyed throughout major parts of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. Not a single "racial incident" was reported during the uprising, while newspaper pictures and TV news bore witness to the variously-colored faces emerging from the merchants' windows and celebrating in the streets. Similarly, looting, vandalism, and attacks on police were not confined to the City proper; Mount Vernon, Yonkers and White Plains were among suburbs in which the same things happened, albeit on a smaller scale.

Rioting broke out in the Bronx

House of Detention where prisoners started fires, seized dormitories, and almost escaped by ramming through a wall with a steel bed. Concerning the public, the Bronx District Attorney fumed, "It's lawlessness. It's almost anarchy."

Officer Gary Parlefsky, of the 30th Precinct in Harlem, said that he and other cops came under fire from guns, bottles and rocks. "We were scared to death...but worse than that, a blue uniform didn't mean a thing. They couldn't understand why we were arresting them," he continued.

At a large store at 110th Street and Eighth Avenue, the doors were smashed open and dozens of people carried off appliances. A woman in her middle 50s walked into the store and said laughingly: "Shopping with no money required!"

Attesting to the atmosphere of a

"collective celebration," as one worried columnist put it, a distribution center was spontaneously organized at a Brooklyn intersection, with piles of looted goods on display for the taking. This was shown briefly on an independent New York station, WPIX-TV, but not mentioned in the major newspapers.

The transformation of commodities into free merchandise was only aided by the coming of daylight, as the festivity and music continued. Mayor Beame, at a noon (July 15) press conference, spoke of the "night of terror," only to be mocked heartily by the continuing liberation underway throughout New York as he spoke.

Much, of course, was made of the huge contrast between the events of July, 1977 and the relatively placid, law-abiding New York blackout of November, 1965. One can only mention the

obvious fact that the dominant values are now everywhere in shreds. The "social cohesion" of class society is evaporating; New York is no isolated example.

Of course, there has been a progressive decay in recent times of restraint, hierarchy, and other enforced virtues; it hasn't happened all at once. Thus, in the 1960s, John Leggett (in his *Class, Race and Labor*) was surprised to learn upon examining the arrest records of those in the Detroit and Newark insurrections, that a great many of the participants were fully employed. This time, of the 176 people indicted as of August 8 in Brooklyn (1,004 were arrested in the borough), 48 percent were regularly employed. (The same article in the August 9th *San Francisco Chronicle* where these figures appeared also pointed out that only "six grocery stores were looted while 39 furniture stores, 20 drug stores and 17 jewelry stores and clothing stores were looted.")

And there are other similarities to New York, naturally; *Life* magazine of August 4, 1967 spoke of the "carnival-like revel of looting" in Detroit, and Professor Edward Banfield commented that "Negroes and whites mingled in the streets (of Detroit) and looted amicably side by side...."

The main difference is probably one of scale and scope—that in New York virtually all areas, even the suburbs, took the offensive and did so from the moment the lights went out. Over \$1 billion was lost in the thousands of stores looted and burned, while the cops were paralyzed. During the last New York rioting, the "Martin Luther King" days of 1968, 32 cops were injured; in one day in July, 1977, 418 cops were injured.

The left—all of it—has spoken only of the high unemployment, the police brutality; has spoken of the people of New York only as objects, and pathetic ones at that! The gleaming achievements of the unmediated/un-ideologized have all pigs scared shitless.

"New York, New York" is reprinted from John Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal*, on the twentieth anniversary of the blackout. John's book will soon reappear in a new edition published by C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions. Watch for it!



John Hamm Being

AFTERWORD COMMENTARY ON Form and Content in *Elements of Refusal*

Paul Z. Simons

A new, expanded edition of John Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal* is forthcoming from C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions. The following afterword is excerpted from the new edition.

In the event that the powers that be ever re-institute book burning, it is my considered opinion that *Elements of Refusal* will be consigned, immediately and with extreme prejudice, to the pyre.

Elements of Refusal (EoR) broke onto the anarchist scene like a bombshell. In the fall of 1988 the book had been making the rounds of the milieu in New York, with some extremely mixed reviews, and after a Libertarian Book Club Forum I found myself in temporary possession of a copy. I finished the volume, cover to cover, in a single sitting of some fourteen hours and then re-read it in a more deliberate, careful fashion over the course of the following week. I recall distinctly the feelings associated with my first engagement with Zerzan's work, something like drowning in honey, inexorable, deliberate, overwhelming.

At the time of the publication of EoR the state of anarchist theory was dismal, particularly the North American variant. My time was spent digging up dead authors espousing simplistic theories criticizing social categories that had ceased to exist. Re-worked syndicalism, martyrologies of every stripe and description (a one-woman show called "Emma"), and social ecology, if you had enough money to earn the degree. Further, by this time many of us had begun to see through the situationist con; their lack of rigor in ascribing an immense array of social and cultural phenomena to "the spectacle," the ludicrous use of the most retrograde Marxist categories, the childish example of their practical activity, and finally, their embrace of the Enlightenment project (the appropriation of Nature) without recognition nor discussion of the historical dialectic contained therein. As if to drive the point home, North American adherents of situationist ideas plunged head first into the same mistakes listed above and tore themselves and their various organizations and journals to theoretical shreds before they could effectively publicize their ideology.

Elements of Refusal then, was something new; Zerzan had pulled out all the stops and followed his theoretical assumptions to their logical conclusion. In the process he introduced three innovations that now form the foundation of much of the theoretical discussion in North American anarchist

circles. 1) Zerzan developed a method of dialectical critique which is both immanent and extraneous to the phenomena that he is examining. One of the sequelae of the application of this method has been the reinvigoration of the project of philosophical anthropology. 2) EoR raises the issue of criteria as regards insurrectionary subject. Zerzan's thesis that those who have the most to lose invariably make the deepest and most radical insurrectionary breaks with the past, while empirically sound, jettisons two centuries of bad social philosophy, and 3) Zerzan argues consistently throughout the volume that violence (riot, insurrection) has been (or could be) an effective and vital force for social change, in direct contradistinction to Leftist ideology whose general stance on the issue has been a puritanical prohibition, justified by either moralism or cowardice (your choice).

In a letter I received recently, a correspondent described the critical method employed by Zerzan as an example of immanent critique. This statement, while minimally accurate, misses the mark as to where Zerzan has taken the method. Horkheimer in *The Eclipse of Reason*—immanent critique confronts, "the existent, in its historical context, with the claim of its conceptual principles, in order to realize the relationship between the two and thus transcend them." Conceptually almost intuitive, and not a particularly new nor sophisticated critical strategy, it has been employed by theorists as disparate as Marx and Voltaire. The first generation of critical theorists merely refined the technique and provided it with a philosophical and historical foundation. There are limitations to immanent critique, however, and part of Zerzan's innovative manipulation of the technique stems directly from these parameters. Immanent critique, as the name implies, situates itself firmly on the terrain of the system it seeks to examine. It is maintained by partisans of immanent critique that this is the method's greatest strength. It may also be its greatest flaw. For while holding a system to its own claims produces (or should produce) a relatively high standard of consistency and rigor, it also forces the theorist to avoid any criteria arising either from the subjective or external sources, put succinctly, in judging what is (the dominant society) one is restricted from using what is not (utopia).

Another flaw contained within immanent critique is its reliance upon the conceptual claims of the system as criteria. During the period in time that the first generation of critical theorists were writing such a mechanism worked, and well. In the current era, and as a result of the lessened expectations associated with the pronouncements of both neo-conserva-

tives and neo-liberals, the claims of capital have decreased to almost nothing. Where before the critical theorist had myriad, sweeping statements from the "best of all possible worlds," "chicken in every pot," grab bag to minor, work-a-day promises and statements made by bosses, politicians, and captains of industry to utilize as criteria with which to judge the behavior of the *ancien regime*. Today, even cost of living increases are threatened in collective bargaining negotiations and corporate downsizing has brought back the good old days of early capitalism including classic nineteenth century workplace phenomena such as immediate dismissal and the ten-hour workday. This ideological retrenchment has been global in scope; no one speaks anymore of the developing countries, or uses the argument that La Antigua, Guatemala or Kinshasa will one day be indistinguishable from Hoboken. The global contraction of capital has meant a concomitant contraction in its conceptual terrain, which in turn produces a decreased ability to abstract criteria and utilize them in the implementation of an immanent critical method.

Zerzan's response to this weakening of the critique has been to unilaterally (and without asking permission) expand the method to include empirical data, historical and anthropological, to strengthen his hybrid of immanent critique. His expansion has also occasionally included subjective material, which, while architectonically indefensible, has been justified in the past by a number of other thinkers. Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization*, not only augments the concept of reason by placing phantasy firmly within its bounds, he also makes of phantasy a motive conceptual and psychological apparatus which, for lack of a better name, may best be described as the "will to utopia." In spite of the problems, incoherence and confusion associated with *Eros and Civilization*, the philosophical construct used in defining phantasy seems accurate and though with less intelligent or careful theorists there remains a great possibility of mischief and foolishness, it provides the serious critical theorist with a powerful tool.

Inclusion of anthropological and historical empirical data isn't particularly earth-shattering, however, what Zerzan does with these references is to use the material as a criteria with which to judge capital and the contemporary state of the human species. Zerzan has been greatly assisted in this

project by developments in anthropology dating from the mid-1960s. Developments in this area have included discussions as disparate as the diet of the !Kung branch of the San in the Kalahari to the taxonomic differentiation between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo erectus*. Where all of this academic work has led is a complete reappraisal of pre-agricultural human society; from the classic Hobbesian view of pre-historical life as being "nasty, brutish and short," to an understanding of pre-agricultural humanity as living an existence of singular grace, harmony, solidarity and health. The impact that these anthropological discussions have had on critical

theory are, and will continue to be, staggering. In the idealist tradition the concept of an original separation (humanity from nature, individual from society, subject from object) has always formed the foundation of its critical etiology, now anthropology has produced empirically grounded speculation of the existence of just such an event. Anthropology has also provided critical theorists with a glimpse of human life and society in that "Golden Age," the Ur-phenomena of the species. Zerzan was the first critical theorist to put these pieces into place and he did so in general categorical discussions, as well as using the "Golden Age" to establish a set of criteria with which to judge the historical development of current social and cultural phenomena. It is this foundation which grounds his discussions of language, number, time, art and agriculture; which in turn has allowed Zerzan the freedom to stand outside the system under examination

without losing either his critical stance or effective criteria, ultimately enhancing the ability to level a withering assault on the dominant society.

One of the fascinating, and on first glance seemingly tangential, sequelae of Zerzan's use of empirical anthropology has been to revivify the project of philosophical anthropology developed by Max Scheler, a phenomenologist associated with political Catholicism, during the first two decades of the twentieth century. For Scheler the goal of the work was to illustrate, in precise detail, how, "all the specific achievements and works of man—language, conscience, tools, weapons, ideas of right and wrong, the state, leadership, the representational function of art, myths, religion, science, history, and social life—arise from the basic structures of human existence" (*Man's Place in Nature*, 1928). Of course, the comple-

tion of such a task is impossible primarily because the project assumes a static human nature divorced from historical and social circumstance. For critical theory, however, if the project and problem statement could be appropriately reformed there may be much to be learned from such an investigation. Horkheimer thought so too, and in an essay titled "Remarks on Philosophical Anthropology," he frames the project thus, "The project of modern philosophical anthropology consists in finding a norm that will provide meaning to an individual's life in the world as it currently exists." Or to be even more clear, insight into human nature should, at a minimum, inform those who criticize the present in hopes of realizing a quantitative break with it. Zerzan's theoretic address this in a negative, critical manner. Returning to the anthropological data, if the vast majority of human organization and institutions have not been characterized by language, number, time, and art then these phenomena must not be associated with satisfying basic needs and desires (human nature). Such theoretical machinations may never produce a final answer or series of answers as to what human nature is, but they do produce an outline of what human nature is not. This is critical theory fulfilling its promise; not illuminating truth, but excluding falsehood.

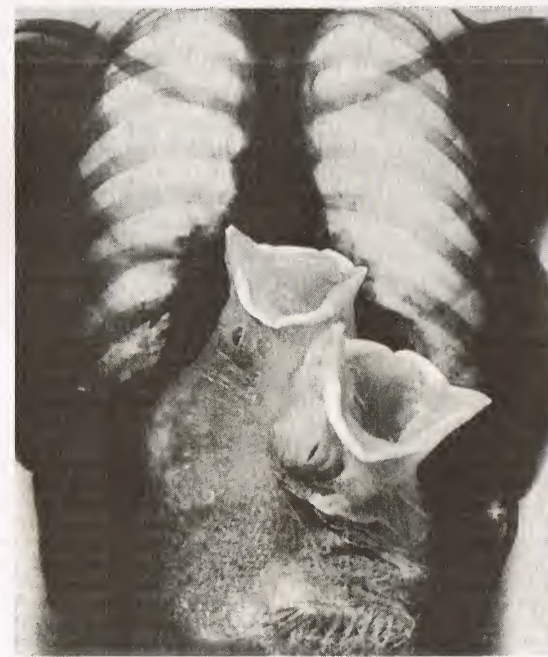
One of the basic tenets of the theory of opposition, at least since Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals, has been the uncontested claim of the proletariat as revolutionary subject. Nineteenth century thought continued and refined this virtual article of faith. There were a few wafflers, Bakunin, for instance, discussed the lumpen as holding great promise as a potential revolutionary subject but in the end, and under pressure from his Swiss, artisan supporters he dropped this line of conjecture. Suffice it to say that when even apologists for reaction, Hippolyte Taine comes to mind, accept and include the danger of this new social class in their writings the point has been made and accepted; left, right and center. The proletarian gospel continues down to the situationists, who, unable to distinguish bourgeois from proletariat using the marxist formula based on economic class, redefined the battle lines so that order-givers morphed into bourgeois and

order-takers became revolutionary subject. The social war of the haves and the have-nots is as old and accepted as the system that produced them, which should make one wonder just how accurate the description is. Zerzan has come at the problem from a very different angle, however, and as one might expect found the whole discussion lacking in both clarity and scope. The second section of *EoR* contains essays dealing with, what one theorist in the milieu has termed, "lost history." This label seems more than appropriate, if one adds the caveat that "lost" conveys a broad enough definition to include both misplaced and disappeared into the halls of academia—never sighted again.

Zerzan's historical essays then deal with examples of riot, insurrection and physical refusal, generally. In each instance the rioters have primarily been persons of the middle classes, individuals who are small property owners, persons of some standing in their communities, and finally, individuals with a great deal to lose, and very little motive to tear their respective societies down. This general statement is applicable to participants in riots and insurrections throughout history; Luddites, Regulators, Whiskey Rebels, Rebecca and her Sisters, Captain Swing, King Mob, the Paris Commune of 1871, Makhnovists, the New York City boogie-till-ya-puke party and power outage of 1977, the MLK assassination

riots, May '68 in France and so forth. While not all of the above events are discussed in *EoR*, investigation into these occurrences reveals similar findings as to their participants; the vast majority were employed, or employers, artisans, weavers, farmers, mechanics, sailors, officer cadets, students, merchants, tavern keepers, local elected officials; they were not solely nor even conspicuously the industrial proletariat. Throughout the historical essays in *EoR*, Zerzan makes this point, implicitly and explicitly using primary sources. Zerzan isn't the first theorist to uncover this information, Crane Brinton, a colleague of Marcuse's at the Office for Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA), in a study of the revolutionary milieu during the Terror found that the Jacobins presented for a brief period of time the spectacle of men

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Johann Hummyn Being



The RIOT

At present there is no conscious debate concerning mankind's finality. Mankind's goal, necessarily, is to come to an end. This is why the absence of any debate goes against this goal.

The debate about the end of humanity is the very content of history. As well, this debate alone is the criterion for what is historic and what is not. Today's lack of a debate is not only fortuitous, for human society is organized in the absence of debate, including the filling in of this real lack with the appearance of a debate. This is why those who fight this organization fight this lack. Today, this combat has been driven outside of consciousness. So completely has alienation invaded consciousness that consciousness appears to be a moment of alienation.

But while this phenomenon of history's absence becomes general in history, it cannot suppress history. On the contrary it is the debate about humanity which supersedes this phenomenon. This debate about humanity finds itself outside of consciousness, and against alienation. Alienation no doubt has invaded all mediation and all organization, but it cannot capture immediacy and spontaneity. Here is where the real debate about humanity, the world and their finality has found refuge and is concentrated. It is a practical debate where

words once again become onomatopoeia and ideas become punches. But this rough, raw, savage negativity remains the only one present.

The riot is the only practical and public moment in which alienation is criticized as the organization of society, which blocks any debate about mankind's finality. Once it is organized, a riot is no longer a riot. It is the strength and weakness of that which constitutes the only tribunal for those who want to master humanity: this tribunal is just a surge of life without consciousness. The riot is at present the only one of thought's activities which moves faster than alienation.

Riots are easy to recuperate, discredit or crush, except when and where they take place. In time's depths where we now find ourselves, each riot is like the awkward, angry scraping of a flint, but what results transforms coldness and obscurity into their opposite. Always too quickly swamped or stamped out, riots nonetheless are the living refusal of submission and alienation, a crowbar that opens horizons. And their limits are such that it is tempting to call them limitless. For limits like these the key of consciousness has become rusty.

Roman plebeians' riots, peasant uprisings, or nineteenth century working class riots are very different from modern

ones, contrary to what is generally assumed. It is their content which is different: a Roman senator, a feudal lord or even a nineteenth century wheeler-dealer prince could not have imagined what today reveals—that the richness of humanity has taken refuge in these poor revolts of the poor. The conditions which give rise to them are also different: they always menace the State in a world entirely divided into States; they are always urban in an entirely urbanized world. They are a battle for thought in a world in which thought has freed itself from human grasp; when there are leaders, leaders are outflanked, where there are commodities, commodity value is destroyed. Their actors are different from the past: they are anonymous. Contrary to what is generally assumed, there are no longer any manipulated riots. Potential manipulators have relinquished mastery over the world, and in leading them astray, they have lost mastery of the crowds. Whatever the number of participants, a modern riot is out of measure. Semi-literate, poor and unsatisfied, riot's enemies resemble potential rioters more than potential recuperators. But the reverse is also true: modern rioters are bursting with ideology, fear and satisfaction. And their separations, that this unique modern festival threatens to supersede, constitute their first police, as well as an end of any form of police. Last of all, more than the fear they provoke it is the immensity of the shame of what they reveal which, unlike in the past, makes it impossible to attribute them to any party. This cover of silence discredits them as well.

A riot is something very short in time, it usually lasts a few hours, rarely a few days. A riot is very localized in space, it always takes place in a city, often in just one neighborhood and often in a marginalized neighborhood. Today, rioters active in the world are only a tiny minority of the world. Separated from each other, even the account and motivations of their emotions have been relinquished to those who took no part in the riot, unless in combating them. Today it is hardly unheard of for rioters to put more faith in what they see on the news than in what their memory recalls. Almost always defeated in the streets (to the extent that many believe that the very fact of fighting is a victory, which at times contributes to their defeat), they are also defeated with respect to theorizing their beginning of a debate, thus abetting the liquidation of this debate.

Professional rioters, which are at times evoked during these liquidation campaigns, exist: but they are uniformed or plainclothes policemen and informers. No one else is paid to be present. Rioters are amateurs: no hierarchy, no specialists. And if you run into the same rioters in different riots, that means they are real amateurs.

The rioter risks his life. Anyone judging the riot without having participated in it only runs the risk of shame. At today's going rate for shame there is no comparison between rioters and non-rioters when they express themselves. Courage and fear, which in the riot reach paroxysms that cinema and literature still attribute to wars between

States, are always abstract outside the riot, allowing those absent—the observer, the enemy—to minimize and hush it up. But when courage and fear are liberated limitlessly, other violent emotions are freed as well. And to know which ones, when it is a question of riots and not of wars between States, it is necessary to have finished reading, and get on with it. There lies the beginning of the debate about the end of the debate.

The *Bibliothèque des Émeutes* will commit no other incitement to riot. In effect, since the riot is spontaneous, we find inciting it contradictory. Consciousness cannot incite unconsciousness. You don't go to a riot, you are in a riot. Today's practice of emotion, that is, taking the draining of emotions as the only limit, is either falsified as a spectacle or has fallen into modus operandi-less immediacy. The riot and the emotion of life are no longer premeditated, and this is wherein lies their poetry.

On the other hand, inciting to riot is against the law in most States of the world. That constitutes one of their lesser contradictions: today they are a principal and perpetual incitement to riot, the truth-suffocator that makes it explode.

In itself, a riot is just an intense moment that is both weightless and profound. Its inherent goal is to spread. When a riot spreads from a neighborhood to a city, and from a city to every city in a State, from one day to the next and then to an entire week, from scorn to respect, and from ignorance to universal consciousness, this is what is known as an insurrection. An insurrection which overflows State borders, which takes the totality as its goal and reveals the ground of the human dispute, is a revolution. There is no known example of a revolution which did not start with a riot.

This text, from April 1990, is the opening article in the Bulletin N° 1 of the Bibliothèque des Émeutes.

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SINCE APRIL 1990

It has been two years since a wave of riots, unprecedented in a decade, has risen throughout the world. This movement, unidentified as such, kept on growing steadily until the middle of 1991. Since the summer of 1992, it decreased continuously. Both the rise and decline of this revolt changed its own original and constitutive moment, the riot itself.

Concerning two points, the riot cannot be considered as described in the preceding text. First, it is no longer a spontaneous meeting place, where everything becomes possible. People in a riot are no longer happily surprised, they rather expect what is going to happen. More and more they "go" to a riot in little groups, more or less organized. Secondly, the media has also lost its puzzled spontaneity when faced with such events, because journalists are also attacked by rioters now and expelled from what they could only falsify. Therefore, the media either fights a riot by making it a show, a spectacle (Los Angeles, May 1992, for instance), or silences it with liquidating understatements (Los Angeles, December 1992).

On both sides of the barricades, the indecision and, to the detriment of the revolt, its potential, have diminished, since this earlier and more optimistic text. B.E.

Whose Unabomber?

John Zerzan

Author's note: Our condition, and that of the natural world, have worsened since the following was written two years ago. As the trial of Ted Kaczynski approaches (set to begin November 1997) we may see that more people now realize that there's a war going on.

Technogues and technopaths we have had with us for some time. The Artificial Intelligence pioneer Marvin Minsky, for instance, was well-known in the early 1980s for his description of the human brain as "a 3 pound computer made of meat." He was featured in the December 1983 issue of *Psychology Today*, occasioning the following letter:

Marvin Minsky:

With the wholly uncritical treatment—nay, giddy embrace—of high technology, even to such excrescences as machine "emotions" which you develop and promote, *Psychology Today* has at least made it publicly plain what's intended for social life.

Your dehumanizing work is a prime contribution to high tech's accelerating motion toward an ever more artificial, de-individualized, empty landscape.

I believe I am not alone in the opinion that vermin such as you will one day be considered among the worst criminals this century has produced.

(Signed) In revulsion, John Zerzan

A dozen years later the number of those actively engaged in the desolation of the soul and the murder of nature has probably risen; but support for the entire framework of such activity has undoubtedly eroded.

Enter Unabomber (he/she/they) with a critique, in acts as well as words, of our sad, perverse, and increasingly bereft technological existence. Unabomber calls for a return to "wild nature" via the "complete and permanent destruction of modern industrial society in every part of the world," and the replacement of that impersonal, unfree, and alienated society by that of small, face-to-face social groupings. He has killed three and wounded 23 in the service of this profoundly radical vision.

There are two somewhat obvious objections to this theory and practice. For one thing, a return to undomesticated autonomous ways of living would not be achieved by the removal of industrialism alone. Such removal would still leave domination of nature, subjugation of women, war, religion, the state, and division of labor, to cite some basic social

pathologies. It is civilization itself that must be undone to go where Unabomber wants to go. In other words, the wrong turn for humanity was the Agricultural Revolution, much more fundamentally than the Industrial Revolution.

In terms of practice, the mailing of explosive devices intended for the agents who are engineering the present catastrophe is too random. Children, mail carriers and others could easily be killed. Even if one granted the legitimacy of striking at the high-tech horror show by terrorizing its indispensable architects, collateral harm is not justifiable.

Meanwhile, Unabomber operates in a context of massive psychic immiseration and loss of faith in all of the system's institutions. How many moviegoers, to be more specific, took issue with *Terminator 2* and its equating of science and technology with death and destruction? Keay Davidson's "A Rage Against Science" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 4/30/95) observed that Unabomber's "avowed hatred of science and technological trends reflects growing popular disillusionment with science."

A noteworthy example of the resonance that his sweeping critique of the modern world enjoys is "The Evolution of Despair" by Robert Wright, cover story of *Time* for August 28, 1995. The long article discusses Unabomber's indictment soberly and sympathetically, in an effort to plumb "the source of our pervasive sense of discontent."

At the same time, not surprisingly, other commentators have sought to minimize the possible impact of such ideas. "Unabomber Manifesto Not Particularly Unique" is the dismissive summary John Schwartz provided for the August 20, '95 *Washington Post*. Schwartz found professors who would loftily attest to the unoriginality of fundamental questioning of society, as if anything like that goes on in classrooms. Ellul, Juenger and others with a negative view of technology are far from old hat; they are unknown, not a part of accepted, respectable discourse. The cowardice and dishonesty typical of professors and journalists could hardly be more clearly represented.

Also easily predictable has been the antipathy to Unabomber-type ideas from the liberal-left. "Unabomber" was Alexander Cockburn's near-hysterical denunciation in *The Nation*, August 28/September 4 '95. This pseudo-critic of U.S. capitalism rants about Unabomber's "homicidal political nuttiness," the fruit of an "irrational" American anarchist tradition. Cockburn says that Unabomber represents a "rotted-out romanticism of the individual and of nature," that nature is gone forever and we'd better accept its extinction. In reply to this effort to vilify and marginalize both

Unabomber and anarchism, Bob Black points out (unpublished letter to the editor) the worldwide resurgence of anarchism and finds Unabomber expressing "the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American anarchism, which has mostly gotten over the workerism and productivism which it too often used to share with Marxism."

In spring '95 Earth First! spokesperson Judy Bari labeled Unabomber "a sociopath," going on to declare, definitively but mistakenly, that "there is no one in the radical environmental movement who is calling for violence." This is not the place to adequately discuss the politics of radical environmentalism, but Bari's pontificating sounds like the voice of the many anarcho-liberals and anarcho-pacifists who wish to go no further in defense of the wild than tired, ineffective civil disobedience, and who brandish such timid and compromised slogans as "no deforestation without representation."

The summer '95 issue of *Slingshot*, tabloid of politically correct Berkeley militants, contained a brief editorial trashing Unabomber for creating "the real danger of government repression" of the radical milieu. The fear that misplaces blame on Unabomber overlooks the simple fact that any real blows against the Megamachine will invite responses from our enemies. The specter of repression is most effectively banished by doing nothing.

For their part, the "anarchists" of *Love and Rage* (August/September '95) have also joined the anti-Unabomber leftist chorus. Wayne Price's "Is the Unabomber an Anarchist?" concedes, with Bob Black, that "most anarchists today do not regard the current development of industrial technology as 'progressive' or even 'neutral,' as do Marxists and liberals." But after giving this guarded lip-service to the ascendancy of Unabomber-like ideas, Price virulently decries Unabomber as "a murderer dragging noble ideas through the mud" and withholds even such political and legal support that he would accord authoritarian leftists targeted by the state. *Love and Rage* is defined by a heavy-handed, manipulative organize-the-masses ideology; approaches that are more honest and more radical are either ignored or condemned by these politicians.

But this selective mini-survey of opposition to Unabomber does not by any means exhaust the range of responses. There are other perspectives, which have mainly, for obvious reasons, been expressed only privately. Some of us, for one thing, have found a glint of hope in the public appearance, at last, of a challenge to the fundamentals of a depraved landscape. In distinction to the widespread feeling that everything outside of the self is beyond our control, the monopoly of lies has been broken. It might be said that Unabomber's (media) impact is here today, only to be

forgotten tomorrow. But at least a few will have been able to understand and remember. The irony, of course, is that lethal bombings were necessary for an alternative to planetary and individual destruction to be allowed to be heard.

The concept of justice should not be overlooked in considering the Unabomber phenomenon. In fact, except for his targets, when have the many little Eichmanns who are preparing the Brave New World ever been called to account? Where is any elementary personal responsibility when the planners of our daily and global death march act with complete impunity?

The number of those actively engaged in the desolation of the soul and the murder of nature has probably risen; but support for the entire framework of such activity has undoubtedly eroded. Enter Unabomber...with a critique, in acts as well as words, of our sad, perverse, and increasingly bereft technological existence.

The ruling order rewards such destroyers and tries to polish their image. The May 21, 1995 *New York Times Magazine's* "Unabomber and David Gelernter" humanizes the latter, injured by a Unabomber bomb at Yale, as a likable computer visionary preparing a "Renaissance of the human spirit." From no other source than the article itself, however, it is clear that Gelernter is helping to usher in an authoritarian dystopia based on all the latest high-tech vistas, like genetic engineering.

Is it unethical to try to stop those whose contributions are bringing an unprecedented assault on life? Or is it unethical to just accept our passive roles in the current zeitgeist of postmodern cynicism and know-nothingism? As a friend in California put it recently, when justice is against the law, only outlaws can effect justice.

The lengthy Unabomber manuscript will go undiscussed here; its strengths and weaknesses deserve separate scrutiny. These remarks mainly shed light on some of the various, mostly negative commentary rather than directly on their object. It is often the case that one can most readily learn about society by watching its reactions, across the spectrum, to those who would challenge it.

"Well, I believe in FC/Unabomber—it's all over the country...his ideas are, as the situationists said, 'in everyone's heads'; it's just a matter of listening to yer own rage," from a Midwesterner in the know. Or as Anne Eisenberg, from Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, admitted, "Scratch most people and you'll get a Luddite."

And from the *Boulder Weekly*, Robert Perkinson's July 6, '95 column sagely concluded: "Amidst the overwhelming madness of unbridled economic growth and postmodern disintegration, is such nostalgia, or even such rage, really crazy? For many, especially those who scrape by in unfulfilling jobs and peer longingly toward stars obscured by beaming street lights, the answer is probably no. And for them, the Unabomber may not be a psychopathic demon. They may wish FC the best of luck."

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Beaubourg: FUTURE CANCER?

Jacques Camatte

Whether as a trick, a diversion, or core-work within a well-established project, the Beaubourg Cultural Center occupies a point where a number of phenomena converge. Its existence is significant of the transformation of the community of capital. All that cannot be considered here. I will restrict myself to pointing out some fundamental parallels between art and capital.¹

Art developed at the moment when human beings were separated from their community. There was no art in the long prehistory preceding that event. The term isolates the materialization of a cognitive means for people to represent their world, from which they weren't separated. It was part of a nonabstracted knowledge, that is, not presented solely through abstraction, as occurred later. It was what Leroi-Gourhan called a drifting knowledge:² a radiant, multidimensional thought in sympathy with its surroundings, since the break hadn't yet occurred. So, in contemporary terms, this art was simultaneously language, science, magic, ritual, etc. At the same time it was part of a whole that it recognized and to which it gave signification.

After the break art was to become the means for recreating the old community, the "Lost Totality." With the loss of immediate coherence, art was the mediation reestablishing communication. This search for the lost community is clear in Greek theater, opera, cinema, and the attempts to realize total art (even in happenings), even if it no longer appears in such terms to those doing them. It's not just art as the sum of the artistic actions trying to reaffirm a whole, it's each particular art that rushes into this endeavor. It's as if each wanted to reorder the whole and reform it from itself, involving a reconstitution from a certain viewpoint and understanding; for linearization began

as soon as the "radiant phenomenon" was destroyed, because of the break and the autonomization of the parts constituting the original whole. Attempts at reconstitution failed to stop this, since they began from a separated part. It's impossible to catapult oneself straight into another community. But it's the only starting point for rediscovering radiant thought.

Nostalgia for lost community is most obvious at times of appearance of art derived from opposition between two moments in human history in a well-determined area. Examples are the oppositions between matriarchy and patriarchy³ in Greek tragedy, and feudalism and nascent bourgeois society returning to the old models (Renaissance). A common characteristic is that it's the defeated parts that produced art (such as provincials or American southerners), as if art is all the more glorious when attached to something irredeemably lost. So for some art would be a consolation for the defeated, ignoring its affirmation not of the defeat but of creation or maintenance of a possibility, a refusal of the diktat of realism and the reality principle.

Secularization happens at the same time. Loss of the sacred leads art to take nature as its model. In reaction it is equally the place of its conservation. The heresies have survived through art.

At the time of capital's formal domination over society, art could remain outside it and accomplish its anti-bourgeois function. As it happened, it was anticapitalist, for the bourgeoisie historically needed art to impose itself on the world, as it was a class that exalted it.

This opposition continued until the attempt by the Dada movement to link up with the revolution then occurring in Germany. This simultaneously admitted that no separated activity could reorganize a totality or be a starting point for another community. Nonetheless artists

at that time showed more insight than revolutionaries,⁴ because their proclamation of the death of art was linked to their perception of the end of a world, the old bourgeois society, because of the passage from formal to real domination of capital, which occurred over several years (notably 1914-45). At the turn of the century, painters had already anticipated capital's development in breaking all reference to nature and in discovering that everything is possible.

The Futurists were the first to entirely and methodically reject the hegemony of cultural stereotypes. Once the social barriers were abolished, the masses—for whom the quantitative appeared as the new twentieth-century determinant—would have to organize the world differently. The new dynamism and its collective nature made it transgress the old social categories and imposed an active transformative logic already foreseen by Marx. So the world no longer appears as inevitability but as a collection of possibilities. In the euphoria of this new freedom, experienced in several areas of contemporary intellectual life, classes and noble subjects vanished from the collection of social relations. (One of the things passing through this breach was totalitarian practice.)

Now, "Everything is possible" is capital's fundamental characteristic. It's essentially revolutionary because it destroys obstacles impeding development and eliminates taboos and congealed mimesis: all are put back into question and into movement. (Taboos that cannot be lifted are exteriorized and consumed in representation, for example, the incest taboo and psychoanalysis.) If capital (under its modern as well as antiquated forms) thus became definite by taking over the immediate production process, this was due to the confluence between the movements of exchange value's autonomization and



Johann Humyn Being

peoples' expropriation. It could successfully pass to its real domination over society only at another moment, because of confluence between its nature and the deep desires of people separated from their community and stripped of divine and natural referents. In accomplishing this even the implied consequences could be forgotten: desire becoming all the grander and imperious the more people are desubstantialized and alienated.

The restricted man or woman, sepa-

rated from everything, wishes to reconstitute everything from potentialities, beginning the opening of the field of applied science. For a time, the referent could still be the individual human being, until capital's anthropomorphosis, when it realized its real domination over society and established itself as representation (and therefore as referent). This reconstitutes the splintered person, who is ever more enslaved. So what Eliade said relates only to the initial moment:

The nihilism of the early revolutionaries and nihilists represent attitudes already surpassed in modern Art. No great artist of our times believes in the degeneracy and imminent disappearance of his/her art. From this point of view, their attitude resembles that of the "primitives": they have contributed to the destruction of their world and their artistic universe—in order to create another one.⁵

Not only has the natural referent been destroyed and another world created, but the very forms coming from the previous great destructive movement have themselves been destroyed (especially in Picasso).⁶ This again resembles capital's movement, which is impeded by substantialization and must avoid becoming fixed. Eliade continues in an equally illuminating way:

It's significant that the destruction of artistic language coincided with the development of psychoanalysis. Depth Psychology brought renewal of interest in origins, an interest characteristic of people in archaic society. A close study of the process of re-evaluation of the myth of the end of the world in modern Art would be interesting. It would be found that artists, far from being the neurotics they are often called, are, on the contrary, psychologically more sane than many modern people.⁷ They've understood that a true beginning can come only after a true end. And artists were the first moderns to apply themselves to destroying their world,⁸ to recreate an artistic universe in which people could simultaneously live, observe and dream.⁹

The world created since the 1920s is actually one in which people have decreasing importance and significance, because psychoanalysis has deprived them of these qualities: the various qualities of the psyche have been exteriorized and transformed into representations.¹⁰ The artistic universe created is metaphorically that of capital. Such is Beaubourg: the idealized and ideal factory, industrial revelation and capital, presenting itself as art. The subject becomes art itself, completely realizing it, going beyond its reconciliation with life.

Beaubourg reabsorbs the dimension of art as nostalgia for the past, since it is a museum, a place for hoarding (the old form of behavior of exchange value become capital). Since exhibits of contemporary painting are held in it,¹¹ it's also the place where credit is obtained. As Caillois¹² justly remarked,

credit invades art: "When execution is replaced by credit, by a blank check, Art finds itself reduced to derisory size and, at the extreme, disappears. It disappears by becoming almost the opposite idea."

This is evident since, to the extent that there remain no concrete representations and referents through which people could come together again, it's clear that the important thing will be the individual's credit, whether accorded spontaneously or through the influence of advertising (something becoming important in art).¹³ Now, credit is the means of appraisal and behavior in the material community of capital, which is partly instituted through generalization of credit. With inflation this becomes capital's confidence in itself. The same process rules over the whole human environment. People disconnected from their old relationships, referents, and sentiments can only reconstruct their "unity" and social relationships through external mechanisms such as advertising, criticism, etc. (It's no longer possible to speak of community, since it's that of capital in every case).

Progressive abstraction is bound to the loss of the general referent (general equivalent). This implies that there's not just abstraction but also its autonomization. So it becomes practically synonymous with the arbitrary: "The arbitrary here is basically the absence of all justification" (Caillois), a kind of gratuitous act (so Gide's theory isn't without historical significance). Paradoxically, the gratuitous is real for others only through appearance of the credit bestowed by justified significance or significant justification. Obviously this has a clear relationship to the saturation of the art market at the end of the last century, which meant that new openings had to be found. The picture could be decomposed even to the extent that unprepared canvas would be put forward as the artwork, a work with multiple possibilities. But that is but an effect of the phenomenon, since it too would have to lead to the demand for the end of art.

That death arrived. Nevertheless, art still exists. It no longer has anything to do with what was previously understood by the term. And those wanting to revive Dada's project can only carry out a "murder of the dead."¹⁴ Capital's art is knowledge of capital. It's a way to

achieve knowledge of the new world it has created, in which the sacred, nature, men and women exist only behind death masks.

As Caillois emphasized, the ridiculous often accompanies the arbitrary. It cannot fully realize itself or else the capitalization of the pictures produced would cease, putting an end to hoarding and ruining many people, and also breaking down many museographical institutions. The ridiculous corresponds to the disappeared and ephemeral, things affected by present-day capitalism. Here the same forms are again found: capital too cannot really eliminate hoarding, gold, and the past and create itself, so to speak, ex nihilo. Basically it can only escape the past by running away from it: inflation.

Here we encounter capital's essential "project": it must dominate the future or else its power would be put back into question and its domination wouldn't be real. This is already present in the concept of capital, but can only be achieved at a given moment in its "life."¹⁵

Consequently, there can no longer be a specific anticipation and abstraction of the heart of a totality (a perceived abstraction) by which to perceive the distinctive and significant parts. Initially the future is produced; there is as much imagination as possible; reality and image are fused.¹⁶ The imposed image invades everything, to the extent that it isn't yet produced with its reality. In effect, capital needed its own image to be able to implant itself within the socioeconomic whole and to dominate it. It then had to annex all images and, to confirm its domination, eradicate their presuppositions and replace them with its own.

So the factory becomes indispensable—art having to be produced from art and artists in a manner amenable to capital. For what matters is to touch the mass of human beings (otherwise there would be no realization of art)¹⁷ who still haven't internalized capital's lifestyle, who are still more or less bound to certain rhythms, practices, superstitions, etc., and who (even if they have taken up the vertigo of capital's rhythm of life) don't necessarily utilize its image, and therefore live a contradiction or jarring, and are constantly exposed to "future shock."

Everything must be understood

through capital's image. Such is Beaubourg's function: a carcinoma, a neoplasm that must divert the aesthetic flux into domination of the future. It will create roles to that end. This carcinoma will overrun everything and secrete its metastases everywhere. No individual encountering Beaubourg will remain unaltered: his/her image will be reoriented, reordered, or completely transformed (all the more when taken in the totality) through exposure to living in anticipation.

Baubourg is the future cancer. It organizes the destruction of art extolled by Dada and, to the extent that culture is presented as nature, deprives human beings of any possibility of escape. This is all the more true because of the need for nature powerfully affirmed since 1968: it has to be diverted toward a wholly formed, dominated, and programmed nature, magically capturing all revolt.¹⁸

Baubourg's role isn't annihilation of all revolt (at least not immediately), since, as has been said, one of art's sources rises from the clash between two historical moments. The integration-realization of art by capital implies its integration of revolt. It will be absorbed. Better: revolt will be declared insignificant and a more total rebellion proposed to the individual, drowning him/her in revolutionary possibilities because there are no reference points and he/she is disowned. Revolt can no longer begin from the individual and his/her released possibilities; the being can no longer give structure to his/her revolt, for enjoyment is always the basic model: always promised but never attained, because it's always deferred....

So even if painters, musicians, and poets arrived at an intuition of elements of the human community, they could do so only to the extent that they accepted work at a center like Beaubourg. It provides the possibility to reinvigorate the image of capital, which swamps everything, even if this is to pervert it, since it is the great "embezzler" (*dérouteur*).

Capital's future lies in the complete uprooting of all kinds of people, so that they're completely liberated and can be moved in any direction whatsoever, to do whatever they're told to do. It will amount to human life without human beings, just as cancer (the high point of

alienation) is life excluding the life of the being in which it developed. But simultaneously it is the ultimate vital reaction of a body afflicted with a bizarre life, as much on the nutritional as the affective or intellectual plane, for cancer is caused by no microbe, virus, or pathogenic agent. It's caused by the wandering of humanity and is the typical human sickness under the domination of capital, which is also a product of the great wandering. No therapeutic like reformism or revolution can cure the human species, only the abandonment of the crazy dynamic it's been following.

I'm well aware that many people consider that I'm making capital into an entity, a mysterious being outside human beings, while I'm simply showing that it realizes a human project (domination over nature), through the process of anthropomorphism. They also deny that my description of development is correct and recall what Eliade said concerning the creation of an artistic universe: that people could change a movement; that they could divert what is now moving toward destruction, reification, etc.... They don't actually recognize that sooner or later they will be reduced to saying "I didn't want that" like those intellectuals who initially supported fascism. It's unfortunate that, if truth is an unveiling, for many it happens only retrospectively. Nevertheless, even this retrospect already displays many facets that all indicate a single reality. Even the blindest must recognize that it's necessary to abandon this world which is so congenial to the future cancer, the inevitable promise of abominable events. (March, 1977)

NOTES:

For example, it would clearly be necessary to study Beaubourg's importance with regard to the organization of space and urbanization (i.e., the mineralization of organic nature). Nor am I considering similar phenomena already under way in other countries, especially the U.S.A.

2. See *Le Geste et La Parole* (1964). No particular passage is cited since the entire book must be not only read but studied.

3. These terms are used for simplification and to avoid long theoretical digressions on the nature of the human groupings in the Greece of Aeschylus and Euripides.

4. This statement should be tempered by consideration of the Anarchist movement at the turn of the century, which, in its terrorist and negationist tendencies, declared the wish to speed up this end, avoid decomposition, drag the masses from the listlessness induced by democracy, and build afresh.

5. See *Aspects du Mythe* (1962, pp. 93-94).

6. See Caillois's "Picasso the Liquidator" (*Le Monde*, 28/11/75) and the ensuing polemics.

7. Nevertheless, can't they be said to be more sensitive to human pathology, in the sense that they've had a more shocking glimpse of the result of the wandering?

8. Eliade was far ahead in reporting a discovery announced by Attali in "Noise": that music anticipates social development. And what goes for music goes for all the arts. That's a commonplace. Its interest is that Attali makes himself the recuperator of its "noise" and poses as mediator of capital. What's he actually telling us?

"A new theory of power and a new politics are needed. Both require the elaboration of a politics of noise and, more subtly, an explosion in the capacity to create order starting from each individual's noise, beyond the channelling of pleasure into the norm."

For him, it's a matter of listening—as is the case for the current ecological demands—in order to recuperate the various "noises" to ensure the survival of theory, power, and politics. It's worrying that, to allow scientific comparison, he still wants to reduce us...to noises!

9. It shouldn't be forgotten that Western art accomplished this destruction-creation by plundering so-called "primitive" peoples: American Indians and Africans. This is another aspect of capital's "rejuvenation" which I described in *Invariance* Vol. 2 No. 6 in "Working Theses on Communist Revolution."

10. Let us add that the mediation of pedagogy and ethology means that the world of childhood and early moments in the life of our species are also affected. In particular, with regard to childhood, it has allowed the creation of an industry of playthings and products "specific" to children, who were excluded from their life and creation. The moment when "Homo Ludens" (Huizinga) is discovered is that when humans are increasingly robbed of play.

11. By simultaneously incorporating museum and experimental center, Beaubourg realizes one of Toffler's projects: the establishment of past communities to allow those unable to follow power's rhythm to get their bearings, and future communities for those living only through anticipation (see *Future Shock*).

The incorporation of a Center of Contemporary Architecture plagiarizes Voyer's "Institute of Contemporary Prehistory." Briefly, the presence of experimental centers indicates a wish to fuse science and art. More precisely, what is seen here reinforces an already distinct philosophical tendency: the loss of autonomy. Art and philosophy follow in science's wake in order to produce something. They become commentaries on science, hermeneutics.

12. See "Picasso the Liquidator," an article to which I will return later.

13. Later it will be necessary to investigate fashion and advertising, considering them as forms for creating and representing the world of capital.

14. The title of an article by Bordiga, in which he showed that capital can only regenerate itself by destroying all dead, accumulated labor which impedes its process of valorization-capitalization.

15. See *Invariance* Vol. 2 No. 6: "Here is the fear, jump here."

16. One thus goes beyond abstract art, the mo-

ment of intuition of the basic elements of the community of capital, which had hardly yet appeared. This can now be represented in its totality, so realism is possible. This shows the extent to which Socialist Realism is bound to an ideological perspective and not to a social movement. The Soviet leaders don't realize to what extent abstract art (as well as other recent Western art) represents a reality. Their fear of this kind of art is actually a fear of the subversive in capital, that "Everything is possible," which could be easily diverted in a society in which the capitalist mode of production has great difficulty implanting itself. So the Soviets are condemned to understand only the despotism of capital, without ever "enjoying" its revolutionary liberating aspect. This explains the pro-Western views of elements in the present-day USSR "intelligentsia."

Leroi-Gourhan's statement concerning figuration, very clear in the USSR, is also vital. I'm drawing attention to it, and will eventually return to it, since it concerns the specificity of the whole human phenomenon, and the biological madness afflicting humanity in particular.

The crisis of Figuration is the corollary of the mastery of machinism.... It's particularly striking to observe that, in societies excluding Science and Work from the metaphysical plane, the greatest efforts are made to save figuralism.... In fact it seems that an equilibrium as constant as that co-ordinating the roles of figuration and technique cannot be destroyed without putting the very sense of the human adventure into question.

A simple remark: as I suggested above, capital could very well reintroduce figuralism. But again, it's no longer art as human referent (nor has it been so for some time) but the art of capital.

17. On this subject, I can but raise a matter of great theoretical and historical breadth: that of the continual degradation, the reification-extrication linked with the massification-democratization taking place down the millennia. Progress is often justified by saying that it gave something formerly restricted to a limited circle of individuals to ever-increasing numbers of people. In saying this, what is forgotten is the complementary process of loss of the sacred, nature, and humanity (e.g., in the sense of an art of life in society such as that in the eighteenth century) leading to desubstantialization of human beings and their reduction to transient, insignificant beings. It's the undeniable existence of this process that explains the pregnancy of the aristocratic critique and a certain form of art, as well as the Nazi lubrications.

Let us also add that the hope that "the masses would have to organize the world differently" was largely disappointed, and that this draws us to the question of the proletariat's historic mission and the illusion that this class could divert the development of productive forces in a human way. These masses haven't been able to organize: capital did it instead and organized them at the same time. So the solution no longer lies in elites or masses!

18. Capital must provoke and reinvent revolt, therefore organize it, and perfectly realize the spectacle as described by the Situationist International. The separation between actors and spectators tends to disappear, because the spectacle must be worked by all human beings set in motion by some "master illusionists" (Leroi-Gourhan, *Le Geste et la Parole*), mediators of capital.

Guy Debord, 1968

The Situationist Years

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something if it exercises its power.

For the last 48 hours even the capacity of the General Assembly to make decisions has been challenged by a systematic obstruction of all proposals for action.

Up until now no motion could be voted on or even discussed, and bodies elected by the General Assembly (Occupation Committee and Coordinating Committee) see their work sabotaged by pseudo-spontaneous groups.

All the debates on organization, which people wanted to argue about before any action, are pointless if we do nothing.

AT THIS RATE, THE MOVEMENT WILL BE BURIED IN THE SORBONNE!

The prerequisite of direct democracy is the minimum support that revolutionary students can give to revolutionary workers who are occupying their factories.

It is inexcusable that yesterday evening's incidents in the General Assembly should pass without retaliation.

The priests are holding us back when anti-clerical posters are torn up.

The bureaucrats are holding us back when, without even giving their names, they paralyze the revolutionary awareness that can take the movement forward from the barricades.

Once again, it's the future that's being sacrificed in the re-establishment of the old unionism.

Parliamentary cretinism wants to take over the rostrum as it tries to put the old, patched-up system back on its feet again. Comrades,

The reform of the university alone is insignificant when the whole of the old world should be destroyed.

The movement is nothing if it is not revolutionary.

The best picture we have of Debord and his comrades at this point comes from these tracts, which were being issued one after the other. At 5:00 P.M. the Occupation Committee issued the tract "Watch Out!"

The Press Committee situation on the second floor, stair C, in the Gaston Azard library, represents only itself. It happens to be a case of a dozen or so student journalists anxious to prove themselves straight away to their future employers and future censors.

The Committee, which is trying to monopolize all contact with the Press, refuses to transmit the communiques of the regularly elected bodies of the General Assembly.

The Press Committee is a Censorship Committee: don't have anything more to do with it.

The various committees, commissions, working parties can approach the Agence France Presse directly on 508-45-40 or the various newspapers:

Le Monde: 770 91 29

France-Soir: 508 28 00

Combat: leave a message with Robert Toubon, CEN 81 11.

The various working parties can, while waiting for this evening's General Assembly where new decisions will be taken, address themselves to the Occupation Committee and the Coordinating Committee elected by the General Assembly yesterday evening.

EVERYBODY COME TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS EVENING IN ORDER TO THROW OUT THE BUREAUCRATS:

At 6:30 P.M. on May 16, the Occupation Committee issued yet another tract "Watch Out for Manipulators! Watch Out for Bureaucrats!" that underscored the importance of the General Assembly that evening. The central issue for the Occupation Committee was to have the General Assembly vote on the Occupation Committee's appeal for the occupation of all factories. At 7 P.M., the Occupation Committee issued nine slogans ("Abolish Class Society," "Death to the Cops," etc.) to be spread by all means possible. Despite the Occupation Committee's desire to press its case before the General Assembly, it decided to delay the meeting due to the call by leftist groups to march on the Renault factory at Billancourt. In a statement issued just before 8 P.M., the Occupation Committee postponed the General Assembly meeting to 2 P.M. on May 17.

The unions and government warned the students against the march on Billancourt, but the students made the trek under red and black flags anyway. The C.G.T. (the union federation) effectively prevented almost all contact between workers and students. The plan on the part of the student union and other groups was to carry out the Enragé-Situationist plan to march on the government-owned radio and TV station, following the example of Hungary 1956. But on the night of May 16, "manipulators" managed to muck everything up. When most of the students were marching on Billancourt, the manipulators at the Sorbonne tried to call a general assembly. Delegates of the Occupation Committee denounced the meeting and the assembly disbanded.

The next day, May 17, the Occupation Committee sent volunteers to support subway strikers and printed a tract by young Renault workers who supported the strike (against the union). The Occupation Committee also sent numerous poignant and humorous telegrams around the world that, while being pro-councilist, were also pro-anarchist. Many striking workers came to the Sorbonne and the General Assembly of 2 P.M. was crowded and chaotic. The only issue discussed at any length was another march on Billancourt. The General Assembly of 8 P.M. was controlled by people who prevented the Occupation Committee from discussing its activities, for which it was still seeking a mandate. Viénet states that the Occupation Committee didn't want to get more involved in the power struggles and compromises; and "announced that it was leaving the Sorbonne, where direct democracy was being strangled by the bureaucrats." The Situationists realized that they were blocked by the students and militants who only wanted a reform of the university.

The Enragés, Situationists and forty others formed the C.M.D.O. (Council for Maintaining the Occupations), a "councilist" organization rather than a "council" proper. The goal wasn't a Situationist power grab, but the promotion of autonomous organizations. The C.M.D.O., initially taking residence in the National Pedagogic Institute on the rue d'Ulm, was an uninterrupted general assembly that guaranteed egalitarian participation in debates. Three commissions were organized—the Printing Commission (publication and printing of C.M.D.O. publications), the Liaison Commission (ten cars and drivers to maintain contacts with occupied factories), the Requisitions Commission (to get supplies). On May 19, the C.M.D.O. published its "Report on the Occupation of the Sorbonne" and on May 22, "For the Power of



The day after street fighting in Paris, May '68. (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

Workers' Councils." All of the C.M.D.O. publications are reproduced in Viénet's book. The major tracts, which would certainly include the "Address to All Workers" (May 30), had print runs of 150,000 to 200,000—impossible without the help of workers from occupied print shops. The Situationists took great pride in the fact that nothing in these tracts glorified, or even mentioned the Situationist International. Above all, these tracts called for worker autonomy. At the end of May, the C.M.D.O. moved to the basement of the School of Decorative Arts where it designed six striking posters composed of white letters on a black background. But none of these exemplary works (translated and published simultaneously in Italy, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Czechoslovakia when the Russian troops reestablished order after the Prague Spring) capture the spirit of the activity of the C.M.D.O. as one of the songs they composed:

THE COMMUNE'S NOT DEAD

At the barricades of Gay-Lussac,
The Enragés at our head,
We unleashed the attack:
Oh bloody hell, what a party!
We were in ecstasy amongst the cobblestones
Seeing the old world go up in flames.

CHORUS: All that has shown, Carmela,
That the Commune's not dead (repeat)

To brighten things up, the combatants,
Fucking set fire to cars:
One match and, Forward!
Poetry written in petrol.
And you should have seen the C.R.S.
Really get their asses burnt!

(chorus)

Politicized, the *blousons noirs*,
Seized the Sorbonne,
To help them fight and destroy,
They put no faith in anybody.
Theory was realized,
The shops were looted

(chorus)

What you produce belongs to you,
It's the bosses who are the thieves.
They are taking the piss out of you,
When they make you pay in the shops.
While waiting for self-management,
We'll apply the critique of the brick.

(chorus)

All the parties, the unions,
And their bureaucrats,
Oppress the proletariat,
As much as the bourgeoisie
Against the state and its allies,
Let's form workers' councils.

(chorus)

The Occupation Committee,
Spits on Trotskyists,
Maoists and other prats,
Who exploit the strikers.
Next time there'll be blood split,
By the enemies of freedom.

(chorus)

Now that the insurgents
Have gone back to survival.
Boredom, forced labor,
And ideologies,
We'll take pleasure in sowing
Other May flowers to be picked one day.

FINAL CHORUS: All that has shown, Carmela,
That the Commune's not dead (repeat)

Aside from the reports of the C.M.D.O.'s relations with other councilist organizations that come down to us from Viénet and the unattributed essay "The Beginning of an Era" in *Situationist International* #12 (the authorship of all the anonymous articles in issues 10, 11 and 12 was later claimed by Debord) not much else is known about the activity of the C.M.D.O. Certainly, a great deal of energy went into trying to establish links with other councilist organizations: "And the strikers' participation in the links established by the C.M.D.O. in and outside Paris never contradicted their presence at their own work places (nor, to be sure, in the streets)." It's easy to imagine the C.M.D.O. sitting around drinking wine and singing their songs, but the record shows that they were quite busy communicating with revolutionary groups inside and outside of France. Yet not even Viénet's eyewitness account paints a vivid picture of the C.M.D.O. camped out in the basement of the School of Decorative Arts or distributing their tracts and posters around Paris.

Back to the big picture: Georges Seguy (on behalf of the workers) and Prime Minister Georges Pompidou negotiated the Grenelle Accords (named after the Parisian street) at the end of May. This agreement was rejected by the base of workers and no-one went back to work. The communists and union federations picked up on this and tried to get behind a "popular government." De Gaulle responded by saying that he would maintain power by all means, including civil war. The army was deployed around Paris and the bourgeoisie marched in support of the government. At this point, the communist party was behind the strike movement and reportedly wanted to bring down the Gaullist regime, but they were actually just as much appeasers as the unions. The last C.M.D.O. tract "It's Not Over!" was issued on June 8, 1968—it attacked the unions, the communists and democratic socialists for trying to position themselves to win the next electoral campaign after the strike. The tract ends with emblematic slogans such as: "The emancipation of workers will be the creation of workers themselves or it will not happen." Repression, effected by the military in the streets

of Paris, became increasingly severe; and by the second week of June people began to go back to work. The Odeon and Sorbonne were evacuated by the police on June 14 and 16.

The C.M.D.O. dissolved on June 15, and the most compromised Situationists went into exile in Brussels. This retreat was a source of pride for the Situationists. Given the fact that many of the C.M.D.O. had been arrested during the course of the revolution, it is fairly amazing that the Situationists escaped the dragnet. The official Situationist interpretation of the revolution is expressed in Debord's "The Beginning of an Era" (*Situationist International* #12):

Since the defeat of the occupations movement, both those who participated in it and those who had to endure it have often asked the question: 'Was it a revolution?' The general use in the press and in daily conversation of the cowardly neutral phrase, 'the events,' is nothing but a way of evading answering or even formulating this question. Such a question must be placed in its true historical light. In this context the journalists' and governments' superficial references to the 'success' or 'failure' of a revolution mean nothing for the simple reason that since the bourgeois revolutions *no revolution has yet succeeded*: not one has abolished classes.

In this light, the S.I. did submit its own activity to a self-critique, but these shortcomings were negligible.

The main points that the Situationists stressed were:

1. May '68 was the first wildcat general strike in history.
2. May '68 was the largest strike to stricken an advanced industrial country.
3. The revolutionary goals were more radical, modern and explicitly expressed than any previous revolutionary movement.
4. May '68 was NOT a student protest, but a proletarian revolution.
5. This proletariat was enlarged to include white-collar workers, delinquents, unemployed, high school kids and young hoods.
6. May '68 was a revolutionary festival that contained within it, a generalized critique of all alienations.

One truly amazing aspect of May '68 was the way the protest encircled the globe. Saturday May 11, 50,000 students and workers marched on Bonn, and 3,000 protesters in Rome. On May 14, students occupied the University of Milan. A sit-in at the University of Miami on May 15. Scuffles at a college in Florence on May 16. A red flag flew for three hours at the University of Madrid on the 17th. And the same day, 200 black students occupied the administration buildings of Dower University. On May 18 protests flared up in Rome, and more in Madrid where barricades and clashes with the police occurred. On May 19, students in Berkeley were arrested. A student protest in New York, an attack on an ROTC center in Baltimore—the old world seemed to be on the ropes. On May 20, Brooklyn University was occupied by blacks, and occupations took place the next day at the University of West Berlin. On May 22, police broke through barricades at Columbia University. The University of Frankfurt and the University of Santiago were occupied on May 24. Protests in Vancouver and London in front of the French Embassy on May 25. On Monday May 27, university and high school students went on strike in Dakar. Protests by peasants in Belgium on May 28. On May 30, students in Munich

Social Anarchism revisited

Continued from page 19

from principles that might in any way be construed as radical." It's not hard to figure out what a "respectable" socialist is.)

Here one can easily lament with Bookchin. The potential to draw people into the struggle for a libertarian lifestyle is not being exploited, for whatever reason. Yet the majority of anarchist organizations in the world (and in the U.S.A.) can be labeled "social anarchists," which by Bookchin's definition are rational libertarian socialists who seek to organize society along cooperative, federalist lines. These organizations, as we know, are often anemic and, with a few exceptions, have made only the most marginal inroads into society. If we are to follow Bookchin's logic, we should draw the conclusion that the lifestyle anarchists are drawing potential supporters of social anarchism away and that this not only weakens the core of anarchist ideas, but weakens the anarchist movement. Many people would agree with Bookchin; I do not. On the one hand, it is easy to adopt labels and it is easy to join radical cliques that do not require any commitment to social struggle or building an alternative lifestyle and cooperative movements. Some might argue that Bookchin's "lifestyle" anarchism is attractive to people who do not want to (read, are too lazy to) settle down to a long and often fruitless task. On the other hand, social anarchism also has its drawing points for people. Partially it appeals to people who believe in the need for cohesive organization. It also does not typically call on people to actively change the social relations in their lives and does not offer such scary prospects as the destruction of technology. And it also does not call on people

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protested, as did students in Vienna the next day. On June 1, protests spread to Denmark and Buenos Aires. The next day the massive Yugoslav insurrection began. In Brasil, 16,000 students went on strike on June 6, followed by a large protest march in Geneva for democratization of the university. Even in Turkey, 20,000 students occupied the universities in Ankara and other cities. The chronology just keeps going as occupations, protests, scandals and barricades continued throughout the summer in Tokyo, Osaka, Zurich, Rio, Rome, Montevideo, Bangkok, Dusseldorf, Mexico City, Saigon, Cochabamba, La Paz, South Africa, Indonesia, Chicago, Venice, Montreal, Auckland. "What," people seemed to be asking, "if the entire world were transformed into a Latin Quarter?"

to actually do anything. Usually it is enough to join an organization, distribute literature, and find a few warm bodies to add to the membership list during your lifetime.

Social anarchism should have as much potential to draw people as lifestyle anarchism. If it doesn't, why doesn't it? Why can't the social anarchists (of the MB ilk) build their ranks and continue to look at the individualists as petty-bourgeois exotica? Now this is an interesting question. Bookchin tells us why the egoists won't build a social revolution, but what about the social revolutionaries? Maybe he should have written a book entitled *The Death of Social Anarchism*.

I offer the idea that insofar as anarchist responsibility for the decline in anarchism is concerned, it is not a problem of many people surrendering the core of anarchist principles but of people not implementing anarchist principles. Furthermore, I posit that many anarchists are terrified by the prospect of anarchist society. As the evolutionary anarchists put it, the social conditions are not ready for anarchy. (I can only imagine Bookchin's reaction to any movement that would seek to get rid of capitalism or the state by any necessary means in the here and now.) Anarchism as an ideology and subculture, as Bob Black once put it, can be unconsciously counted on "to endure indefinitely since revolution isn't really imaginable in the here-and-now." Should there be any wonder that calls for "immediacy" would have an appeal to people? They want change now and if personal change and local autonomy is all they can get, they'll take it.

In a way, Bookchin is partially right (just like he's partially left). He says that "freedom dialectically interweaves the individual with the collective" and that "[Individuals] are immensely defined by the relationships they establish or are obliged to establish with each other." If there are people who expect personal freedom but expect to maintain a wealthy, bourgeois, urban lifestyle, which necessitates that thousands of people be exploited to uphold it, then of course these are petty bourgeois individuals. Other individuals, in the tradition of Stirner, do not expect that the world toil to keep up production, and that services on wages be conditions dictated by the capitalist system; instead they would hope that millions of individual acts of refusal would bring down the system. (How realistic a model that is outside of bourgeois, civic society or in the third world is another question; only in places where there is no fear of immediate, real reprisals or starvation can individual rather than collective refusal be an option. But there are different societies—there may be different ways of overcoming the system.) The fundamental thing that must be remembered is that universally, anarcho-individualists want to bring down the system. Bookchin's bogeyman of the self-indulgent, petty-bourgeois egoist who cannot see beyond the realm of his or her own liberation does exist, but is it fair to lump people like that together into a group with people who just have a different view than Bookchin of how anarchy should be achieved? If lifestyle anarchism is replete with New Age, mystic, anti-rational ideas, what of the large number of egoists or individualists who despise such things? If it is primitivist, what

of the cypherpunk breed of anarchist? The answer is, of course, that they all get lumped together. (This is, after all, a person who can judge your commitment to the social revolution by seeing your haircut.) It is ironic that Bookchin criticizes L. Susan Brown for creating "straw collectivists" (while criticizing most collectivists in her *Politics of Individualism*) while his whole book is based on his own creation of a straw lifestyle anarchism. This is poor criticism; this is the work of an ideologue who is not beyond creating some untruths and arrogantly creating polar forces ("an unbridgeable chasm") between which brainless readers must unconsciously choose sides.

Although I don't agree with many premises of the book, there are points which can serve as gateways of greater discussion.

In Bookchin's critique of L. Susan Brown's *Politics of Individualism*, he writes that "the idea that a collective—and by extrapolation, society—is merely a 'collection of individuals, no more, no less' represents an insight into the nature of human association that is hardly liberal, but, today particularly, potentially reactionary." Just as dirt and water make mud, a group of individuals become something different than their individual components. Yet society or groups must either recognize that individuals must ultimately be responsible for their own actions or it must take responsibility for the action of all its members. It therefore must act as an agent of control. (In anarchist ideology, the idea of human harmony acts as an agent of control. Control can be self-control.) That members of society may regulate human interaction may not be so bad (given individual volition) or

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acting without regard for their own material interests. Brinton, an apologist for the dominant society with a sneaking admiration for revolution, seems clearly stunned by this and fails to follow the insight to its logical conclusion.

The potential impact of this thesis regarding the insurrectionary subject, particularly in the context of a post-industrial economic situation, is shattering. To enumerate just one development, it provides some empirical substantiation to Camatte's thesis that humanity, in the years since the Second World War, has been utterly proletarianized, altering the insurrectionary project from one of class versus class to species versus society or specifically, social concept. There are many other implications of this thesis, to be worked out in the coming years by theorists who have as yet to find a voice, a method (and a publisher).

Loose Cannons

Who Is Chomsky?

Noam Chomsky is probably the most well-known American anarchist, somewhat curious given the fact that he is a liberal-leftist politically and down-right reactionary in his academic specialty of linguistic theory. Chomsky is also, by all accounts, a generous, sincere, tireless activist, which does not, unfortunately, confer his thinking with liberatory value.

Reading through his many books and interviews, one looks in vain for the anarchist or any thorough critique. When asked point-blank, "Are governments inherently bad?" his reply (28 January 1988) is no. He is critical of government policies, not government itself, motivated by his "duty as a citizen." The constant refrain in his work is a plea for democracy: "real democracy," "real participation," "active involvement," and the like.

His goal is for "a significant degree of democratization," not the replacement of political rule, albeit democratic rule, by a condition of no rule called anarchy. Hardly surprising, then, that his personal practice consists of reformist, issues-oriented efforts like symbolic tax resistance and ACLU membership. Instead of a critique of capital, its forms, dynamics, etc., Chomsky calls (1992) for "social control over investment. That's a social revolution." What a ridiculous assertion.

His focus, almost exclusively, has been on U.S. foreign policy, a narrowness that would exert a conservative influence even for a radical thinker. If urging increased involvement in politics goes against the potentially subversive tide toward less and less involvement, Chomsky's emphasis on statecraft in itself gravitates toward acceptance of states. And completely ignoring key areas (such as

nature and women, to mention only two), makes him less relevant still.

In terms of inter-governmental relations, the specifics are likewise disappointing. A principal interest here is the Middle East, and we see anything but an anarchist or anti-authoritarian analysis. He has consistently argued (in books like *The Fateful Triangle*, 1983) for a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. A characteristic formulation: "Israel within its internationally recognized borders would be accorded the rights of any state in the international system, no more, no less." Such positions fit right into the electoral racket and all it legitimizes. Along these lines, he singled out (*Voices of Dissent*, 1992) the centrist

(copies available from me). He gave a rather non-sequitur, pro-left response and has gone right on keeping his public back turned against any anarchist point of view.

Chomsky's newest book of interviews, *Class Warfare*, is promoted in the liberal-left media as "accessible new thinking on the Republican Revolution." It supposedly provides the answers to such questions as "Why, as a supporter of anarchist ideals, he is in favor of strengthening the federal government." The real answer, painfully obvious, is that he is not an anarchist at all.

Long a professor of linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he achieved fame and fortune for his conceptions of the nature of language. Professor

Chomsky sees language as a fixed, innate part of some "essential human nature" (Barsamian 1992). Language develops along an intrinsically determined path, very much like a physical organ. In this sense, Chomsky says language "simply arose" (1988) and that we should study it as "we study any problem in biology" (1978).

In other words, language, that most fundamental part of culture, has no real relationship with culture and is a matter of instinct-driven formation through biological specialization.

Here, as everywhere else, Chomsky cannot even seem to imagine any problematics about origins of alienation or fundamental probings about what symbolic culture really is, at base. Language

for Chomsky is a strictly natural phenomenon, quite unrelated to the genesis of human culture or social development. A severely backward, non-radical perspective, not unrelated to his unwillingness—this "anarchist" of ours—to put much else into question, outside of a very narrow political focus.

The summer 1991 issue of *Anarchy* magazine included "A Brief Interview with Noam Chomsky on Anarchy, Civilization, & Technology." Not surprisingly, it was a rather strange affair, given the professor's general antipathy to all three topics. The subject of anarchy he ignored altogether, consonant with his avoidance of it throughout the years. Responding to various questions about civilization and technology, he was obviously as uncomfortable as he was com-



Jerry Berndt

Salvadoran politician Ruben Zamora when asked who he most admired.

Chomsky has long complained that the present system and its lap-dog media have done their best, despite his many books in print, to marginalize and suppress his perspective. More than a little ironic, then, that he has done his best to contribute to the much greater marginalization of the anarchist perspective. He has figured in countless ads and testimonials for the likes of *The Nation*, *In These Times*, and *Z Magazine*, but has never even mentioned *Anarchy*, *Fifth Estate*, or other anti-authoritarian publications. Uncritically championing the liberal-left media while totally ignoring our own media can hardly be an accident or an oversight. In fact, I exchanged a couple of letters with him in 1982 over this very point

pletely unprepared to give any informed responses. Dismissive of new lines of thought that critically re-examine the nature of civilization, Chomsky was obviously ignorant of this growing literature and its influence in the anti-authoritarian milieu.

Concerning technology, he was, reluctantly, more expansive, but just as in the dark as with the question of civilization. His responses repeated all the discredited, unexamined pro-tech clichés, now less and less credible among anarchists: technology as a mere tool, a "quite neutral" phenomenon to be seen only in terms of specific, similarly unexamined uses.

Chomsky actually declares that cars are fine; it's only corporate executives that are the problem. Likewise with robotics, as if that drops from heaven and has no grounding in domination of nature, division of labor, etc., etc. In closing, he proclaimed that "the only thing that can possibly resolve environmental problems is advanced technology." Yes: more of the soul-destroying, eco-destroying malignancy that has created the current nightmare!

In the fall of 1995 Chomsky donated much of the proceeds from a well-attended speech on U.S. foreign policy to Portland's Freedom and Mutual Aid center, better known as the local anarchist info-shop. As if to honor its generous benefactor appropriately, the info-shop spent the money first of all on a computer system, and several months later financed a booklet promoting the info-shop and the ideas behind it. Among the most prominent quotes adorning the pamphlet is one that begins, "The task for a modern industrial society is to achieve what is now technically realizable." The attentive reader may not need me to name the author of these words, nor to point out this less than qualitatively radical influence. For those of us who see our task as aiding in the utter abolition of our "modern industrial society," it is repellent in the extreme to find its realization abjectly celebrated.

In issues of *The Progressive* and *Z Magazine* during 1996 and 1997, Chomsky has actually argued that no one should support a "devolution" of Big Brother authority—a movement of power from the federal government to state and local levels. This bankrupt and disgraceful "anarchist" (!) angle has been

enough to create a furor among even some of the utterly reformist partisans of those tepid mags.

Most of the above mainly belongs to the well-known, dreary, superficial field of waning leftism, but more pernicious is its apparent influence on those supposedly committed to the goal of anarchy.

Black & Red's latest (1997) offering is a reprint of Chomsky's *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship*, which discusses the shockingly novel and radical thesis that liberals have been known to conceal/distort historical truth. The re-publication of this piece of

memorabilia was assisted (and introduced) by individuals of *Fifth Estate*, which is itself in decline by the measure of its growing leftist component. *FE* was once a vibrant, cutting-edge project. Now its milieu in Detroit can find nothing better than a thirty-year-old, already published relic to give expression to its meager resources.

Chomsky, like Bookchin, represents the failed, inadequate critique of the past, resolutely unwilling or unable to confront the enveloping crisis on all levels. It is past time to go forward and engage the real depths of the disaster facing all of us.

CHRISTIAN ANGST

Jane's dilemma continued as she struggled daily with both dyslexia and agnosticism...

Hmmm...I wonder if there really is a Dog.



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